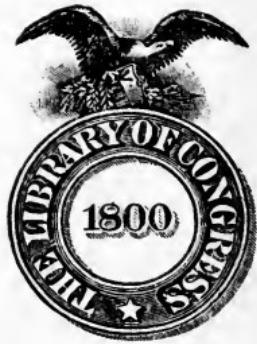


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*"SISTER SPIRIT COME AWAY!"*



Miss ELIZA PERKINS,

Who exchanged this life for a blessed Immortality

TIME 2, No. 10.

# MEMOIRS

AND

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2265

## Moral Productions and Selections

OF

### Miss ELIZA PERKINS,

Who died in New-York, June 20, 1823, aged 18  
years.



When life's tempestuous storms are o'er,  
How calm she meets the friendly shore,  
    Who lived averse to sin;  
Such peace on virtue's path attends,  
That, where the sinner's pleasure ends  
    The Christian's joys begin.

See smiling patience smooth her brow,  
See the kind angels waiting now,  
    To lift her soul on high!  
While eager for the blest abode,  
She joins with them to praise the God  
    Who taught her how to die.

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(Price 25 Cents.)

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M E M O I R S  
OF  
THE LIFE  
OF  
MISS ELIZA PERKINS.

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MISS ELIZA PERKINS, whose excellent moral Productions and Selections will be found recorded in the succeeding pages, was born of reputable and pious parents in New-York, January 27, 1804. At a very early age she was much pleased with Scripture History, and by her conversation exhibited evident proofs that the infant mind is early capable of receiving and entertaining correct ideas of God and Religion. As she advanced in years, no pains were spared in the cultivation of her mind, and the easy circumstances in which she was born and lived, together with the circle of society in which she was wont to move, afforded her advantages which but few enjoy--perhaps a more happy, meek, or affectionate disposition than that which she possessed has rarely ever been known.

Her health began gradually to decline in the early part of February 1820, from which period she appears to have bid adieu to all vain amusements and pursuits of this frail world, and to have devoted her time to the more important concerns of eternity—as she possessed an excellent education, much of her time during her illness was employed in perusing the moral works of pious authors, and selecting therefrom such parts which she conceived would be of the most importance to her fellow mortals, (particularly those who had been the companions of her youth,) which, together with her own moral and well written productions, she left in manuscript, expressing a willingness in the last moments of her illness to have published, if her friends should consider them of sufficient merit. Her disease was of a lingering kind, a circumstance of peculiar advantage for manifesting the influence of Religion in death—and as the testimony of a dying female, in the prime of life, ought to have some weight with those who hear it, we hope and trust much good will be derived by the aged and young, from an attentive perusal of the pious exhortations of Miss Perkins.

It was soon after her Physicians pronounced her complaint incurable, that the fear of death seemed to forsake her, intimating that her faith was confirmed, and her hope established, and always conversed on her approaching dissolution with much apparent satisfaction—manifesting a continual desire to de-

part and be with Christ. Her soul seemed particularly in her last illness to have anticipated heaven.

A few moments previous to her death she requested her friends who were present to assemble at her bed side, being sensible she said that she was then about to leave them, to meet them no more in this world, she had some little advice to impart while yet blessed with the power of speech. Her request being complied with, they were addressed by Miss Perkins in the most affecting and impressive manner—she assured them of her supports, of the goodness of God, and the blessedness of Religion—she admonished them, in the most affectionate terms, not to neglect Religion, and encouraged them to seek the kingdom of God, by referring them to that composure which they now saw in her in her last moments—“Thus peaceful” said she “will you be in the last hour, if you devote yourselves to the service of God.” Having concluded her dying councils to her friends, she very correctly and composedly repeated the following Hymn, which she earnestly requested might be sung at the tomb at the interment of her mortal remains :

Unveil thy bosom, faithful tomb,  
Take this new treasure to thy trust,  
And give these sacred relics room,  
To seek a slumber in the dust.

Break from the throne illustrious morn,  
Attend, O earth, his sovereign word,

Restore thy trust, a glorious form,  
She must ascend to meet her Lord.

Nor pain, nor grief, nor anxious fear  
Invade thy bounds; no mortal woes  
Can reach the lovely sleeper here,  
And angels watch her soft repose.

So Jesus slept, God's dying Son,  
Past through the grave, and blest the bed;  
Rest here, dear saint, till from his throne,  
The morning break, and pierce the shade.

—in a few moments after repeating the last line of the preceding Hymn, she turned her head and smiled on her friends present, and then, with a serene countenance and inexpressible composure, turning her eyes toward Heaven, expired without a sigh or groan.

To the reader we cannot afford greater proof of the amiableness of character sustained by this justly esteemed young lady, while living, than here to record the following eulogy, by a particular acquaintance and friend, which appeared in a public print of New-York a few days after her decease.—

“ It call'd ELIZA long before the hour,  
It call'd her tender soul by break of bliss.”

The boding flush of charm'd Consumption came,  
Among the fresh'ning flowers of her cheek,

And softly fed there with a smiling flame,  
That still grew brighter many a beauteous week :  
Till there was seen a richer dawn of red,  
And a less mellow'd fervour in its light ;  
It was the gaudy prospect of the dead,  
A splendid herald of an early blight :  
The rose of death mix'd with life's feebler rose,  
And beauty bore her to her last repose.

There was a gay yet solemn elegance,  
In that sweet sign which hinted of the tomb ;  
Death seldom made so lovely an advance,  
So full of languor, luxury and bloom ;  
Like glowing clouds that decorate the sky,  
At vernal sunset on a bashful shore  
Brightest and loveliest to the heart and eye,  
When night's dark pinion is just hovering o'er,  
To sweep their fresh and florid light away,  
And make us mourn that such things should decay.

And this fair girl was laid within her shroud,  
And gentle mourners sighed a quivering prayer,  
For lasting sorrow never yet was loud,  
But dumb like that of delicate despair ;  
And her blue eyes look'd beautifully bluer,  
Altho' a glossy dulness bathed them o'er ;  
Her face was calm—her spirit had been pure,  
And now is taken to a holier breast  
Than that to which in this world it had prest.

But wherefore weep when youth and virtue fall,  
Ere the soul's sunshine had been soil'd by earth;  
They rise to realms of blessedness in all,  
The undim'd promise of their budding worth;  
And by that blest exchange escape the snares  
That strew the pathway of the purest here,  
The bright temptations and the glittering cares,  
That clothe young eyes with many a gilded tear,  
And prove that e'en the noblest must sustain,  
In human scenes, their share of human pain.

The much esteemed ELIZA P. whose early exit produced the preceding imperfect tribute to her memory, was descended from reputable parents, who were in a situation to nurture the tender infant to maturity of body and mind. Indeed the delicacy of her frame was such, that nothing but the assiduity and watchful attention of maternal tenderness could have prevented the feeble plant from perishing in its earliest stage. Parental affection too, assisted the flexible faculties to take their right bent, and the uncorrupted heart to retain its purity. Gentle and docile from nature, it was not a task, but a pleasure, to conduct her ready inclinations through all the paths of filial affection, attention and submission. Modest and unassuming, she ever paid a proper deference to her superiors, and a profound respect to her parents; and if she erred at all, it was in her condescensions to her inferiors, and those were younger than herself, yet there was nothing in

her that was servile and mean. On the contrary, you might discover, in her whole deportment, a modest dignity, the dignity of conscious virtue and innocence. Her soft and obsequious temper might often have exposed her to the danger of being led astray, by the examples or solicitations of those, whose principles, and whose morals were faulty. But the quickness of her own moral sense, aided by the early counsels, and steady patron of propriety, which she received from her parents, rendered the citadel of her heart impregnable to the assaults of evil. Such a character could not fail of being beloved, and respected by all ; especially as she endeared herself to all, as well as to her particular friends, by her native sweetness, her sisterly kindness, and her habitual assiduities. Those indeed who love not goodness itself, and are offended at a lustre superior to their own, might withhold their praise. Yet the envious and the evil had less malignity against her; because her modesty rather veiled her brightness, and rendered it less dazzling. Her features were soft and pleasing, expressive of the moral beauties of her soul. She was genteel, easy and effable ; and her conversation pleased all who were present, and injured none that were absent. Her constant attendance on public worship (until prevented by extreme indisposition;) her unaffected seriousness while divine service was performing ; her abstaining from all levity, and secluding herself from all company on the sabbath, but that of the family where she resided, as it favor-

ed nothing of preciseness or gloom, so it displayed an exemplary decorum.

To all her other accomplishments, she added the spirit of religion. Her whole heart and conduct were under its sacred influences and restraints. It was her opinion, that with all her other acquirements, she should be criminally deficient, if she did not pay a supreme regard to that Being, to whom she was indebted for life, comfort, and hope. While, therefore, her conduct was calculated to please her fellow creatures, it was her invariable aim *to walk so as to please God.* She early made a profession of christianity; and her whole conversation was consistent and uniform.

And now, did her religion obscure any of her charms? Nay, it added to them a superior lustre and loveliness. Did it unfit her for cheerful company, Far otherwise: her religion, like a becoming robe, sat easy and gracefully upon her. While she was habitually careful never to counteract its sacred dictates, she was careful too never to violate the rites of good breeding, nor to interrupt, by any unseasonable remarks, or forbidding from, the innocent amusements of a cheerful circle.

Such was ELIZA! And how happy for her friends and for the world, could her life have been pretracted!—But ELIZA WAS MORTAL!—Too delicate for the changes and rigors of this nether world, she was seized at the age of fifteen with a debility and decay, which gradually withered her roses, quinched the

lustre of her eye ; weakened, and at length stopped the springs of life. But see now the advantage and the worth of religion. If her external beauties faded, those of the mind and heart shone out with increasing brightness. The comforts of religion repressed her fears, confirmed her hopes, and delighted her soul. Thus refined and perfected, at the age of eighteen, she drops her mantle of clay, and joins her kindred angels. But what are the feelings of those she has left behind ! Read them in the tears and in the plaudits of her numerous acquaintances and friends ; their plaudits of her excellences, and their tears for their own loss !

If ever friendship wept with soul sincere,  
'Twas o'er the lov'd Eliza's early bier ;  
Nor youth, nor loveliness adorn'd alone,  
For thrice Narcissa's worth was all her own.

Mild were her virtues, of that gentle kind,  
Bespeaking sense with purity of mind ;  
While bland religious most celestial ray  
Corrected, sooth'd, illum'd Eliza's way.

How must her doating parents' heart deplore,  
The lovely daughter they beheld no more,  
Her brothers now laments their loss severe  
And tenderer sisters shed the hearts warm tear.

Alas ! their anxious friendship could not save  
Their dear Eliza from th' invidious grave ;  
'Twas Heavens decree, cease then ye plaintive  
sighs,  
For heaven delighted, call'd her to the skies.

MORAL PRODUCTIONS AND SELECTIONS  
OF  
Miss ELIZA PERKINS.

We shall here commence the record of the Moral Productions and Selections of the much lamented Miss Perkins, with a letter written by her to a younger and absent sister, a few months previous to her death :—

“ Dear Sister,

“ My complaint has at length arrived at that crisis, as to render it almost certain that the brittle thread of life must soon part—my cough increases and such indeed is my weakness and bodily pains at this moment, that it is with much difficulty that I attempt to address a few lines to you—but, as they in all probability will be the last, never did I address you with such feelings, as I now do. O ! my sister, how blessed is the soul, which relinquishes the vanities of the world, and finds rest in Jesus ! Destitute of the image of Christ, we are destitute of all real beauty, compared with Christian holiness ; and this never appears to so much advantage as in youth. How delightful the thought of lovely youth attending

to the one thing needful, and, amid all the tempting pleasures and countless dangers of life, looking up to the God of all grace, and finding refuge there. I must not forbear telling you, my dear sister, that your present condition excites concern as well as pleasure. I long that you may be filled with consolation, and holy confidence. Our religion will meet with trials in this life ; but there is a repentance which needeth not to be repented of. There is a faith which unites the soul to Christ. There is a change of heart, which prepares for the kingdom of God. Religion is a reality. It will last. Nothing on earth is so desirable. 'Tis the only flower which bears an unfading bloom. Endeavour my dear sister, to form clear ideas of the nature of saving religion—let the word of God be your daily study, and your constant guide—let the house of God be your delight, and the friends of God your dear companions ; and let your heart prize the *throne of grace* above all other privileges and joys—yield yourself unto God : be employed for him wholly, and for ever—walk in his ways, and he will give you his consolations.

Under my present heavy afflictions, dear sister, I can say with the Psalmist “I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou, in faithfulness hast afflicted me.” I have indeed cause to bless God that he is now teaching me the vanity of this world, and exciting me to ripen for the joys of a glorious immortality.

Many in sickness are inclined to say, that some other affliction would be better suited to promote their best good, and that some other time would be a more fit time than the period that was chosen—but how incompetent judges are we, what is wisest and best to be done? If we were to be our own judges in such cases, we might strive to pitch upon a trial and for a time of suffering, which would lead us to avoid the cross, and leave us strangers to our own hearts;—we might, indeed, by planning for ourselves, be involved in far greater difficulty and sink into despair. God, who knoweth our particular frame and temper, best knoweth when and how to try us, and how long to continue us under the rod. If we derive spiritual benefit from the afflictions which we endure, we shall be humbled for our sins, and we shall be still, and know that the Lord he is God:—we shall no longer say, any other trouble rather than the present, and any other time to endure it rather than the present; but we shall say “O Lord, thy will be done, both as to the kind and continuance of affliction—oh, cause me to adore thy justice and thy wisdom, and humbly to implore thy mercy.”

To conclude, my dear Almira, it is now my earnest prayer that you may peruse this my last letter, with as much interest as it has been penned by the feeble hand of your dying sister, who commends you to Him, who can rescue you from danger, who can carry you in the arms of his mercy through this vale of

tears, and prepare you for the perfect purity and bliss of heaven—and now

My belov'd Sister thou my dearest friend,  
To thee, this last—this fond adieu I send ;  
Death fast approaches to assent his right,  
And very soon will veil me from thy sight ;  
He woos me to him with a cheerful grace,  
And not one terror clouds his awful face ;  
He promises a lasting rest from pain,  
And shews that all life's fleeting joys are vain ;  
Th' eternal scenes of Heaven he sets in view,  
And tells me that no other joys are true.  
And O, Almira ! my endeared friend  
Say, should'st thou grieve to see my sorrows end ?  
Thou know'st a painful pilgrimage I've past,  
And can you mourn that rest should come at last.

ELIZA PERKINS.

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Reflections on the Tolling of the Bell for a deceased person, at the commencement of a New-Year, addressed by Miss Perkins to such of her female companions with whom she had been most intimately acquainted :—

—“ Hark ! that solemn, doleful toll,  
Announces the departure of a soul !”

Yes ! my dear friends ! and before the close of the present year, how often will that solemn toll be repeated !—how many 'ere the relapse of this short period, will depart this vain world ! who now, young, gay, and in the full vigour of life, seem regardless of

their own mortal state, and conduct as if they indeed — “Thought all mortal but themselves!”— alas! my dear associates!—companions of my youth!—I, who cannot expect to continue but a few days longer with you, but twelve months ago, like you, enjoyed blooming health! and like you, thought the day of my desolution far distant!—alas! sad disappointment! how sudden and unexpected the change!—in the midst of my earthly enjoyments, my pleasing anticipations, I was selected from among your number, as the victim of fatal disease! and although just beginning to live, the king of terrors, it is not improbable, will shortly pronounce me *ripe for the grave!*

My dear young friends—a New-Year commences—and while you participate in the amusements of the season, seriously reflect, that you may be of that number, who will never witness another!—permit me to assure you, however serious the thought, however melancholly the reflection, that such indeed *may* be your fate!—permit my sudden change, from a state of blooming health and activity, to that of painful and mortal sickness, seriously to impress your minds, that “from death’s arrest no age is free!”—that youth, beauty and vigour, are but feeble barriers to the fatal shafts of mortality, which flying promiscuously around, may select some one of *you* too, ‘ere the close of the present year, as a victim!—it is even possible that this night we close our eyes to sleep the sleep of death! Thousands have been thus surprized and ushered unexpected and unprepared, into the

presence of their Judge—thousands, as young and gay as yourselves, have been as suddenly torn from their friends, and palsied by the cold hand of the destroyer!—human life is “but a vapour that appear-eth for a little time, and then vanisheth away!” how unwise then, my dear friends, must it be to delay in the great concerns of immortality from day to day—there is no pause in time—every rolling year, every month, every day, every hour is hurrying us on to eternity.—Promptitude is no where more commendable than in Religion—death, judgment and eternity, the invitations of the gospel; the raptures of immortal bliss, the mortality of the human race, all unite to enforce the exhortation, “seek ye the Lord while he may be found.”

E. P.

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## UNCERTAINTY OF LIFE.

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HOW many solemn ideas, affectionate and profound, do the silent tombs yield to the mind, which contemplates them with gravity, and consults them with seriousness. When we reflect that it is the house prepared for all the living, when we consider that a number younger than ourselves now moulder in the dust, that some of our nearest and dearest connections have made their exit from this vale of tears, what solemn impressions crowd in upon our minds—we have followed them to the grave, we have committed them to the bowels of the earth, they have taken

their subterraneous passage to eternity, and the places which once knew them, know them no more forever. Where are the living ? Going down the rapid tide of time, and according to the invariable laws of nature, must soon sleep in dust. Do not these considerations suggest a necessity of preparation ? Can any harm accrue from having our lamps trimmed and burning, ready for our departure hence ? If not, let us establish our principles and conduct by the rules of christianity, let the criterion of our actions be in consonance with the oracles of truth, which require us to renounce all ungodliness and cupidity, and to live righteously &c. Let him who wanteth in his youth, his strength, activity and prospect of long life, go to the silent tombs and learn, that the monster death is ambitious and insatiate and discriminates not between young and old, but selects his victim, from every age, from every rank and condition of life.

To contemplate the hour of dissolution is the indispensable duty of transitory mortals. Did we know the moment of departure, repentance might, perhaps, be procrastinated. But as the Deity has, for wise and benevolent purposes, shut futurity from our view ; as the next moment may be the harbinger of death, the call for preparation is loud and imperious. Let me ask him, who has rioted in dissipation, who has drank the bowl of intemperance to the bottom, what must he think if he awoke from the sleep of intemperance at the eternal tribunal of offended and insulted Omnipotence ! Life is held by so transitory a te-

nure ; so many casualties way-lay and beset us at every step we advance, that not to prepare for that event, betrays a kind of morbid insensibility of heart, more fitting for a brute than a man. Well does inspiration ask the question, "Our fathers, where are they?" We behold the mansion of our youth ; the tree, where our infant sports endeared our existence ; and where we once beheld the venerable form of a parent, smiling with tenderness on his children.—Look for him now—the "place, which once knew him, knows him no more ;" and we can only find him covered with the clods of the valley. It is an undoubted fact, that death redoubles the value of the object by deprivation. Although the heart cannot tax itself with any criminal act, remembrance awakes a thousand instances of those petty transgressions, to which all human nature is liable, which give a poignancy to the sufferings of the mourner. However much we loved the object of our grief when alive, when dead we are persuaded we ought to have loved more. Whatever irritations existed are buried with the corps—whatever was noble or lovely in the character, survives a melancholy remembrance. Thus does the heart of affliction create new materials for misery ;—and I will add, for the comfort of the mourner, that this very propensity is the sure mark of an amiable mind. When sickness wears away the constitution by the "cold gradations of decay," the surviving friends are, in a measure, prepared for the awful change that is soon to succeed. But where we

behold the face at one moment flushed with health, and the next covered with the paleness of death, the change is so sudden and awful, that the heart sinks under the weight of its pressure. Let those, who have been thus afflicted, now pass in melancholy review a life without reproach towards God. Let memory supply what death has taken away ; and by following the footsteps of the dear deceased, be prepared for a dissolution as sudden, and leave behind them a character equally revered.



### ON DEATH.

“ How vain is man, how short his days !  
At longest date, he’s soon destroy’d :  
Not mortal meeds or human praise,  
Can, Death’s cold darts fly or avoid.  
Why should we then indulge in sin,  
Or lave in vicious pleasure’s tide ?  
For if we once are plung’d therein,  
To endless woe, we soon shall glide.”

“ Think, mortal, what it is to die !”

TO bid farewell to all below the sun—to dissolve connection with all that now gives pleasure or pain—to launch away to a world unknown, are ideas included in the dissolution of that misterious tie, which unites the immortal tenet to a house of clay.—What scenes of wonder and amazement will

unfold, when once the curtain drops, is known only to those who have made the experiment.

Must we shortly close our eyes on all terrestrial scenes? Why then, should we distract our minds with anxiety in the various pursuits of life? Why toil to heap up treasures we are soon to leave? Why harbour envy in our breasts at those who are high fed in the lap of Fortune; when we know that a few revolving suns will bring the period when Death shall demolish all distinctions, but those of virtue and vice? Why cherish resentment, even against our most inveterate enemies? A few moments and the lamp of life is extinguished, and with it both their love and their hatred. Why value ourselves on the advantages of birth, the attainment of learning, or the blandishments of beauty? The grave knows none of these. The rich and the poor, the prince and the cottager, the learned and the illiterate, here mingle in one common mass; and beauty, though once a rival of Venus, is here a repast for worms. One consideration more applies itself with peculiar force, because it involves eternal consequences. Do we believe that we are beings designed for endless existence, and that this life is a state of probation? Shall we then suffer the objects of a day to engross our whole attention? Shall we spend our lives in pursuit of a bubble, while we acknowledge, that, short as is the race of life, we run for an eternal prize?—Forbid it, Heaven! Nor let it be ever said, that rational beings act a part so absurd.

Meditation on death is always useful, and is particularly salutary in a long and dangerous illness, which leaves us in possession of all our intellectual faculties. To meditate with advantage on death it should be contemplated closely with a religious mind. This contemplation is not without pleasure, it produces a sublime emotion, of which no other sentiment can convey an idea : it elevates, it fills the whole soul ; it confuses, but it exalts the imagination in the most delightful manner. How great and affecting are the thoughts of a virtuous man on the bed of death ! In another moment he will depart to see, to know every thing ; he will be eternally united with the only source of all perfection. That active and inquisitive spirit will presently be permitted to discover unveiled truth ; that tender soul, which nothing could satisfy, is gone to enjoy the bliss of loving beyond measure to all eternity ! What a hope ! What an expectation !

Pale DEATH, with equal step, his tocsin rings,  
At the poors' cottage, and the towers of kings.

The apostasy of our first parents introduced the monster death into our world ; and converted into a forest, producing briars and thorns, the blissful garden of Eden. His ravages, on the human race, commenced with the death of "righteous Abel;" since which time, the passage from time to eternity has been guarded by this grim janitor :—and but two, by miraculous translation, have been exempted from the

curse, pronounced upon the representative of mankind, "dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Emisaries from this fell tyrant, in the shape of various diseases and accidents, are posting on the wings of every fleeting moment, to execute the commissions assigned to them. Subtle and insinuating, they veil their instruments of destruction under the most engaging appearances; and glide their poisoned darts, without blunting their points. Impartial and undistinguished, "the high, the low, the rich, and the poor," are arrested in their course by these gloomy messengers; and committed to the custody of reptiles, in the prison of the earth.

To the space of threescore years and ten, in mercy, the term of life is usually limited. Were we to reflect upon the subject, but a moment; we should all confess that the curtailing of the ancient term of probation, is indeed an act of mercy. Those whose years have afforded them experience of but a short space of active life; who have but just launched from parental care into the boisterous ocean; must soon be satisfied that the toils and perils of the voyage are great, and must soon confess with the mariner, who has toiled through the greater part of the prescribed track, that distinguishedly happy are those, whom the "CAPTAIN of Salvation" receives early to himself; kindly abridging the term of preparatory service.

But although reason gives this decision, the feelings cannot but recoil at the idea of dissolution. All have ties, more or less binding, which connect them

with this world ; the rending of which is excruciating to " poor human nature." The charms which alone greatly interest the beholder of this state are friendship and love. Those who feel these ennobling sensations, are shocked with the idea of even a momentary separation from the object of affection ; or of a temporary interruption of the blissful intercourse. But as we cannot expect, in the usual course of events, that the same moment will release, from their clayey tabernacles, the souls of our tenderest connexions, and of ourselves ; the mind should endeavor to fortify itself, by right preparation, for the sad solemnity of bidding them adieu ! or receiving, from their trembling lips, the last mournful accents. *God of consolation !* who canst give strength to the feeble knees, and support the sinking heart ; assist, sustain, and comfort any agonized survivor of a " SISTER," a parent, a brother, or a friend.

But " All men think all men mortal, but themselves." However astonishing it be, the conduct of mankind, proclaims, that the " evil day is far off ;" the irrational supposition, of his own immortality, is expressed by each one's life ; and the assurance of scripture, confirmed by daily experience, is disregarded, and obedience to its call for immediate readiness is deferred. The gay and pleasing objects, which honor, wealth, and pleasure, paint on the delusive canvass, enrapture the superficial spectator ; and the sage who, with the sombre pencil of experience, should inscribe on the front " vanity of vanities ; "

would be branded as a cynic, and the label of truth be pronounced the severity of dotage.

As reflection employs our minds, the vanity of man and his trifling existence, appear in a most striking and conspicuous manner. Born of dust and nursed by mortality, what can his fading body effect, what "lasting honors" can he excite, to crown his unknown days with deathless and extatic fame? The weak and futile projects of his mind, his nobler part, are scarce conceived and confirmed, before he sinks in death and leaves his vain intentions in oblivion. Possessed of nothing which he can value as his own, not even the breath he draws, what are his prospects of futurity, what are the views which bound his imagination and actuate his impotent powers? Engaged in anxious pursuits and occupied in the cares of gathering wealth and fame, he toils for that which he cannot enjoy, and grasps at that which eludes his reach. "How vain" then, how poor and worthless is man! What trifling toys, what frivolous objects surpass his value and importance? Yet man has one possession which is truly valuable and lasting as immortality—a mind—a soul. This noble part of man is formed for glory; but may be doomed to infamy. By the exercise of that mind in virtue and uprightness, it is amply prepared for superlative felicity in the Celestial regions; and by its habits of vice and injustice, it is justly fated to interminable sorrow in the Tartarean realms of woe. "Why should we then indulge in sin," or act the part of "demons here on

earth?" There are many ways in which the mind of man is debased and corrupted and many means by which it might exalt itself and enoble its possessor.

But alas! how few reflect on these things with sentiments of candor and belief; how few are willing to yield the sensual gratifications of the present time and enjoy the permanent joys of regular and virtuous pursuits! How trifling the number who can submit to practice humanity and sacrifice the petty and unworthy motives of animal enjoyments! But notwithstanding these facts, and the obvious necessity of a virtuous course of conduct through this brief and transitory state, yet, multitudes of rational mortals live as tho' they were to remain forever, totally void of morality, and entirely careless of future destinies. Pursuing the unsatisfactory toys of inclination, without restraint or prudence, they enjoy them for a moment and forget that *now* the tolling bell announces the decease of a neighbor and that *to-morrow*, they may be deprived of their temporary pleasures and hurled amongst the senseless dust of earth. The knowledge of the certainty that all must die, and that the passing hour may be the last, ought to convince the unsteady and immoral of the propriety and importance of spending some portion of life in preparation for death. If upon enquiry, it is found that death is but the necessary consequence of existence and a debt due to nature only, then there will be a time to "lave in vicious pleasure's tide" and gratify the utmost wish of sensual and animal enjoyment. But if

death introduces us immediately to realms of bliss or regions of distress, how politic *to fit* for immortal joy!

Time, like a long flowing stream, makes haste into eternity, and is forever lost and swallowed up in there ; and while it is hastening to its period, it sweeps away all things which are not immortal. There is a limit appointed by providence to the duration of all the pleasant and desirable scenes of life, to all the works of the hands of men, with all the glories and excellencies of animal nature, and all that is made of flesh and blood. Let us not doat upon any thing here below for Heaven hath inscribed vanity upon it. The moment is hastening when the decree of Heaven shall be uttered, and Providence shall pronounce upon every glory of the earth, " Its time shall be no longer."

What is that stately building, that princely palace, which now entertains and amuses our sight with ranks of marble columns, and wide spreading arches, that gay edifice which enriches our imagination with a thousand royal ornaments, and a profusion of costly and glittering furniture? Time and all its circling hours with a swift wing are brushing it away ; decay steals upon it insensibly ; and a few years hence it shall lie in mouldering ruin and desolation. Unhappy possessor if he has no better inheritance !

What are those fine and elegant gardens, those delightful walks, those gentle ascents, and soft de-

clining slopes, which rise and sink the eye by turns to a thousand vegetable pleasures? How lovely are those sweet borders, and those growing varieties of bloom and fruit, which recal lost paradise to mind! those living parterres, which regale the sense with vital fragrancy, and make glad the sight by their refreshing verdure and intermingling flowery beauties! the scythe of time is passing over them all: they wither, they die away, they drop and vanish into dust; their duration is short; a few months deface all their yearly glories, and within a few years, perhaps, all these rising terras-walks, these gentle verging declivities, shall lose all order and elegance, and become a rugged heap of ruins; those well distinguished borders and baterres shall be levelled in confusion, and thrown into common earth again. Unhappy man who possesses this spot cf ground, if he has no paradise more durable than this! And no wonder that these labours of the hands of men should perish, when even the works of God are perishable.

What are these visible heavens, these lower skies and this globe of earth? They are indeed the glorious workmanship of the Almighty; but they are waxing old, and waiting their period too, when the angel shall pronounce upon them that "time shall be no more."

The heavens "shall be folded up as a vesture, the elements of the lower world shall melt with fervent heat, and the earth, and all the works thereof, shall

be burnt up with fire." May the unruinable world be but my portion, and the heaven of heavens my inheritance, which is built for an eternal mansion for the sons of God, these buildings shall outlive time and nature, and exist through unknown ages of felicity !

What have we mortals to be proud of in our present state, when every human glory is so fugitive and fading? Let the brightest and the best of us say to ourselves, that we are but dust and vanity.

The grave opens and reduces all to a perfect equality. Youth, health, beauty, fortune, talents, honours, serve for a short time to distinguish one worm of the earth from another. But, look into the house appointed for all living—what a spectacle do we there behold! Ye fathers and mothers of families! who are still so wedded to the world, whose affections, with a sinful excess, are placed on the creature more than on the creator, see here the hideous remains of that amiable and beloved daughter, once so fair and so gay, whose memory still wrings your heart and moistens your eyes—of that promising boy who was the idol of your soul and the hope of your declining years, but who was stopt short in the midst of his career, and cut off in the flower of his age! Disconsolate husband! behold the mingled form of that youthful spouse to whose accents of affection you surrendered the soul, on whose beauteous face you gazed with rapture. Afflicted widow!

see here, the husband of your youth, whose unstrung arms cannot yield you protection, whose dull cold ear can no longer listen to your soothing strains, whose breast once kindled with the purest fire, and beating with the best affections, is now mingled with the clods of the valley. "How vain are all things here below!" How uncertain and transitory our dearest possessions, and our purest joys!—How careful should we be to place our affections on the "friend that sticketh closer than a brother," and who will not, like earthly friends, die and leave us.

Hither let the man of the world also repair, and derive instruction from this scene—What desolation do you here behold!—What profound silence reigns among the inhabitants of the tomb! But this silence is instructive: it is eloquent. Hear you not a voice issuing from yonder grave and saying—*Number your days, and apply your hearts unto wisdom!* And, since such must be the lot of all living—since DUST we art, and unto DUST must return—permit me again to ask—*Why should fragile man be proud?*

Soon the bloom of youth doth fade,  
Wrinkles soon the cheek invade,  
Soon the glossy jet black hair  
Turns to white with age and care;  
The ruby lip, the brilliant eye,  
Lose their lustre, fade and die;  
Thus 'tis Nature speaks aloud,  
Why should fragile man be proud?

The fairest form, the sweetest face  
Must quickly yield to death's embrace,  
Must leave the light, must seek the gloom,  
Must be the tenant of the tomb ;  
No earthly king, 'mid pomp and pride,  
Can turn the dart of death aside ;  
Thus 'tis nature speaks aloud,  
Why should fragile man be proud ?

The virgin fair profuse in charms,  
Whose beauty every bosom warms,  
The cottage girl and gaudy queen,  
Alike must quit this transient scene ;  
Must leave each glittering bauble here,  
In hopes to find a happier sphere ;  
Thus 'tis Nature speaks aloud,  
Why should fragile man be proud ?

It is gain for the Christian to die, because the death removes him from a world of sorrow and imperfection. However desirous we are of long life, and however great the terrors of the grave, we must acknowledge that but small is the portion of pure and unmixed happiness which we here enjoy. Even the most prosperous have their share of suffering. SOLOMON, king of Israel, who enjoyed every thing his heart could desire under the Sun, who sought for happiness in power, in knowledge, in pleasure, in fame, and in every way which men commonly imagine it is to be found, yet declared that all was

vanity and vexation of spirit. If such is the state of those whose "cup runneth over," what must be the condition of such as are exposed to adversity and subjected to the various calamities daily occurring in the humbler walks of life? Poverty and want, sickness and sorrow, anxiety and disappointment form a "*bitter draught*," and in a great measure justify the declaration of Job, "*that he would not live always.*" In the morning of our days, before we have experienced the cares and sorrows of the world, we imagine the prospect before us to be altogether fair and beautiful. We suppose the path of life to be smooth and easy, strewed with roses, where no thorn is found, and beset on every side with sources of enjoyment. But no sooner do we enter on this path, than we find how egregiously we were deceived. Cares and toils, in constant succession, cloud our sky. The tender buds of hope are nipped by the killing frost of disappointment. The airy visions of youthful expectation are dissolved by the touch of real life. We find the world stored with fewer enjoyments than we imagined. We see that nothing is to be gained without labour, toil, and unceasing exertion. We behold around us a fleeting and transitory scene. Our fathers are removed into the land of forgetfulness, and leave us to prosecute our journey alone. Old age advances, with hasty steps, attended with infirmity and disease, destitute of enjoyment, and leaving us nothing to wish for, but that death would come to conclude our sorrows.

## IMPORTANCE OF RELIGION.

THE christian religion is justly denominated the best guide to happiness, the highest, and *surely* the best consolation in life and death ; the surest support of mental peace, the firmest mound against the inroads of vice, and the most prolific mother of morality. She operates in those secret recesses to which the temporal laws cannot penetrate, and where they cannot determine the actions of men ; she furnishes a reply to those questions on which our *all* depends, and on which our contentment, our hopes, and our happiness is grounded ; she answers these questions : Whether the Supreme Being deems us worthy of his Almighty and merciful Providence : whether God is willing to pardon our sins and whether He is our Father : whether Jesus is our Redeemer and Mediator with God : whether he will by his spirit preserve us from sin, and lend us power to become virtuous ; whether at the close of this life, we shall cease to exist ; or whether after death, we have to expect another life ?—But, if the christian religion is to avail us in *these respects*, then it is necessary that she should be free from all erroneous and superstitious ideas ! that she should not consist of mere empty customs and ceremonies, or of an unfruitful belief in unintelligible things ; that she should be an entirely moral religion, and wholly aim at the moral improvement of man. It is then also necessary that we should be acquainted with her, that we should form clear concep-

tions of her import, of her design, of her doctrines, precepts and promises. It is not the name, not the profession of this religion, which makes us wiser, better and more happy. This religion does not operate on us in a preternatural manner, not like a magical means, without our knowledge, without our own will and endeavours. She operates on us only in as far as we are acquainted with her, reflect upon her contents, and know how to make use of her. We must above all things suffer ourselves to be led by her; we must entirely at all times, in all places and circumstances, commit ourselves to her guidance. We must constantly think as *she* teaches us to think, continually obey her commands. To sum up the matter, we must with body and soul, both in life and death, belong to our faithful SAVIOUR alone; it is our duty to apply all our mental and corporeal powers, in every condition, and in every stage of our lives, agreeably to the will and precepts of JESUS CHRIST; but not according to our appetites and passions.—Then may we be tranquil and comforted, even if the earth should quake and reel to its centre, and the adamantine cliffs tumble into ruins! Yea, even if the whole world should be against us—if God is on our side, who can be *against* us?

“Man is born to trouble.” His irregular thoughts and desires often agitate his spirit, and sink him in despondency. The tenure by which he holds human enjoyments is so precarious, that in the very moment of fruition, they may be wrested from him. Numer-

ous are the trials and afflictions to which he is subject from the unfaithfulness of friends, from the malice of enemies, from the fatigue, perplexity, and disappointment of worldly concerns, from the ingratitude or misconduct of those who hold a place in his heart, and from the sudden dissolution of the ties of friendship and affection.

In the multitude of our sorrows, religion affords us consolation. Religion assures us, that, through all this disappointment and woe, there is a friend present with us, on whose affection, wisdom, power, and goodness, we can perfectly rely; and that an infinitely merciful and powerful Protector sustains us, guiding our erring footsteps, and strengthening our feeble spirits. He permits no affliction to approach us, but with some gracious and merciful purpose; to awaken us from the dangerous delusions of pleasure, to excite in us an earnest solicitude for our salvation, to reclaim us from error, to subdue some favorite passion, or to strengthen some grace and virtue, which neglect or temptation may have weakened. Subject to the control of this almighty guardian, all the trials of life are designed to establish our faith, to increase our humble dependence, to perfect our love and fortify our patience, and to make us meet for the inheritance of glory.

Here is the refuge from trouble which religion affords. Uniting us to God through penitence and faith in his Son Jesus Christ, it conveys to us the assurance, that all things shall work together for our

good. Cleansed from the guilt of sin by the precious blood and redeemed from its dominion by the grace of the Redeemer, the sincere believer can constantly solace himself with trust and hope in his Heavenly Father. When difficulties beset him ; when disappointment blasts his fond expectations ; when sorrow and affliction assail him ; he can repose all his concerns and griefs on the wisdom, power, and goodness of his Almighty Friend. His cares are soothed ; his griefs are allayed ; his afflictions lightened. The refreshing comforts of the divine favour are poured upon his soul, and he is filled with peace and joy. “The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want. The Lord is my light and salvation—whom shall I fear ? The Lord is the strength of my life—of whom shall I be afraid ? Thou art my God forever and ever ; thou wilt be my guide, even unto death.—My flesh and my heart faileth ; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever.” “Happy is the man who hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God !”

If reason alone is capable of triumphing over the passions, it has not the power of moderating the violence of the pain occasioned by the sacrifices it requires, because it cannot fill the dreadful void in a heart, which has just renounced the object of its love. But religion preserves us from dejection, by finding employment for the imagination which it exalts, and by elevating the soul. It is capable of more than making amends for the affections which it eradicates.

It imparts to piety a superabundance of pure emotions, and delicious sentiments which would never be felt without it. Had it but this single advantage over philosophy, it ought to be revered and cherished as the inexhaustible source of all consolations.

Religion is the only balm for a wounded spirit. It is the only sure staff for the weary traveller through this wilderness of misery and sin. What an inexpressible grace does it throw over the countenance and actions of its sincere votaries ! It purifies, it adorns, it ennobles our nature. By it we are lifted far above the little considerations of an existence, short as the winter twilight, and unimportant as the faint vision of a distant star. We are led by its influence, to contemplate "the first good, first perfect, and first fair"—and as without the aid of a telescope, the shipwrecked sailor could never discern in the far-off horizon the vessel that is to bring him relief, but might abandon himself to despair : so without religion, man's views would be confined to a narrow circle of melancholy incidents and thoughts ; and he might resign his mind to the dreadful idea, that the earth was his only home, and that death was an eternal sleep. But now he soars in the certainty to other worlds of endless duration, where he shall join his parents, and his friends, in the presence of a common God.

Whatever absurdities may arise from the fancied ardors of enthusiasm, they are much less pernicious to the mind than the contrary extreme of coldness

and indifference in Religion. How is it for those who profess (and perhaps sincerely) to believe with entire persuasion the truth of the Gospel, to declare that they do not pretend to frame their lives according to the purity of its moral precepts ! " I hope," say they, " I am guilty of no great crimes ; but the customs of the world in these times will not admit of a conduct agreeable either to reason or revelation. I know the course of life I am in is wrong ; I know that I am engrossed by the world—that I have no time for reflection, nor the practice of many duties which I acknowledge to be such. But I know not how it is—I do not find that I can alter my manner of living."—Thus they coolly and contentedly give themselves up to a constant course of dissipation, and a general worthlessness of character, which, I fear, is as little favourable to their happiness here or hereafter, as the occasional commission of crimes at which they would start and tremble. The habitual neglect of all that is most valuable and important, of children, friends, servants—of neighbours and dependents—of the poor—of God—and of their own minds, they consider as an excusable levity, and satisfy themselves with laying the blame on the manners of the times—yet, they profess to believe the immortality of the soul, and a future state of rewards and punishments.

Ah, my dear friends, permit me to assure you that Religion is indeed of too much importance to be thus trifled with. Ask your own heart what re-

wards you deserve—or what kind of felicity you are fitted to enjoy? Which of those faculties or affections, which heaven can be supposed to gratify, have you cultivated and improved? If, in that eternal world, the stores of knowledge should be laid open before you, have you preserved that thirst of knowledge, or that taste of truth, which is now to be indulged with endless information? If, in the society of saints and angels, the purest benevolence and most cordial love is to constitute your happiness, where is the heart that should enjoy this delightful intercourse of affection? Has yours been exercised and refined to a proper capacity of it during your state of discipline, by the energies of generous friendship, by the meltings of parental fondness, or by that union of heart and soul, that mixed exertions of perfect friendship and ineffable tenderness which approaches nearest to the full satisfaction of our nature, in the hands of conjugal love? Alas! you scarce knew you had a heart, except when you felt it swell with pride, or flutter with vanity. Has your piety, and gratitude to the source of all good, been exercised and strengthened by constant acts of praise and thanksgiving? Was it nourished by frequent meditations, and silent recollection of all the wonders he hath done for us, till it burst forth in fervent prayer? I fear it was rather decency than devotion that carried you once a week to the place of public worship—and for the rest of the week your thoughts and time were so differently filled up, that

the idea of a Ruler of the universe could occur but seldom, and then, rather as an object of terror than of hope and joy. How then shall a soul, so dead to divine love, so lost to all but the most childish pursuits, be able to exalt and enlarge itself to a capacity of bliss which we are allowed to hope for, in a more intimate perception of the divine presence, in contemplating more nearly the perfections of our Creator, and in pouring out before his throne our ardent gratitude, love, and adoration ? What kind of training is the life you have passed through, for such an immortality ?

And dare you look down with contempt on those whom strong temptation from natural passions, or a train of unfortunate circumstances, have sunk into the commission of what you call great crimes ? Dare you speak peace to your own heart, because by different circumstances you have been preserved from them ? Far be it from me to wish to lessen the horror of crimes ; but yet, as the temptations to these are but seldom, whereas the temptations to neglect, and indifference towards our duty, for ever surround us, it may be necessary to awaken ourselves to some calculation of the proportions between such habitual omission of all that is good, and the commission of more heinous acts of sin ; between wasting our whole life in what is falsely called innocent amusement, and disgracing it by faults which would alarm society more, though possibly they might injure it less.

How amazing is the distance between the extreme

of negligence and self indulgence in such nominal christians, and the opposite excess of rigour, which some have unhappily thought meritorious ! between a Pascal (who dreaded the influence of pleasure so much, as to wear an iron, which he pressed into his side whenever he found himself taking delight in any object of sense) and those who think life lent them only to be squandered away in sensual diversions, and the frivolous indulgence of vanity ? What a strange composition is man ! ever diverging from the right line—forgetting the true end of his being—or widely mistaking the means that leads to it ?

If it were indeed true, that the Supreme Being had made it the condition of our future happiness, that we should spend the days of our pilgrimage here on earth in voluntary suffering and mortification, and a continual opposition to every inclination of nature, it would surely be worth while to conform even to these conditions, however rigorous ; and we see, by numerous examples, that it is not more than human creatures are capable of, when fully persuaded that their eternal interests demanded it. But if, in fact, the laws of God are no other than directions for the better enjoyment of our existence—if he has forbid us nothing that is not pernicious, and commanded nothing that is not highly advantageous to us—if, like a beneficent parent, he inflicts neither punishment nor constraint unnecessarily, but makes our good the end of all his injunctions—it will then appear much more extraordinary that we should perversely go on in

constant and acknowledged neglect of those injunctions.

Is there a single pleasure worthy of a rational being, which is not, within certain limitations, consistent with religion and virtue? And are not the limits, within which we are permitted to enjoy them, the same which are prescribed by reason and nature, and which we cannot exceed without manifest hurt to ourselves or others? It is not the life of a hermit that is enjoined us; it is only the life of a rational being, formed for society, capable of continual improvement, and consequently of continual advancement in happiness.

It is vain, however, to think of recalling those whom long habits and the established tyranny of pride and vanity, have almost precluded from a possibility of impromising by advice, and in whom the very desire of amendment is extinguished; but for those who are now entering on the stage of life, and who have their parts to cultivate, earnestly could I wish for the spirit of persuasion—for such a “warning voice” as should make itself heard amidst all the gay bustle that surrounds them! it should cry to them without ceasing, not to be led away by the crowd of fools, without knowing whither they are going—not to exchange real happiness for the empty name of pleasure—not to prefer fashion to immortality—and not fancy it possible for them to be innocent, and at the same time useless.

The world on a superficial view of it, presents an

appearance of gravity. Deeply engaged in the pursuits of gain, honour and amusement, few men could lament, like Calypso in Telemachus, if they were immortal, and doomed to remain, in everlasting youth and health, on this low orb, wretched as it is represented. But as all are conscious that this is impossible, the next endeavour is to drown thought in the whirlpool of dissipation. Most persons, however, choose to be called Christians, and would be not a little disgusted with the officious monitor, who should venture to suggest to them that, as they seldom or never bestow on Christianity the least solicitude, they can have no just pretensions to the name.

But busy as men are, in pursuits foreign to piety, it is certain, that after a few short years, the principle concern of the proudest, bravest and fairest of the sons and daughters of Adam, will be Religion. To that friend, whom many slight in the seasons of youth, health, and prosperity, they will (secretly, perhaps, but eagerly) fly for succour, in the time of age, sorrow, sickness, and death. What indeed, is man in his most flourishing state? What, the most admired and distinguished individual of us all, but an infirm, dependant creature, subject from the cradle, to ten thousand evils; doomed gradually, often painfully, to decay and certainly, perhaps most deplorably, to die? Second childhood, idiotism, insanity, palsy, blindness, deafness, lameness! ye are powerful teachers to those who mark well your ravages among the sons of men, once most highly distinguished for

strength, comeliness, gunius, all that charms the heart, and dazzles the imagination with transient brilliancy.

"Think mortal," says the poet, "what it is to die." Think also, I add, what it is to see those whom we love, die before us: die, agonized with pain, after languishing with lingering disease; to attend them with all the blandishments of affection, without being able to contribute to their ease, or add one moment to their existence. Is there any partaker of human nature, however thoughtless, who, when he feels actually brought home to his own bosom, or his own family, the real calamities, the sore distresses of life, will not be anxious to seek comfort of religion, to acquaint himself with God, and be at peace with him? His prospect in the world is forlorn and dismal. It is a barren land, where no water is. Though it flattered him in better days, it now turns away from him in the hour of his utmost need.

Religion, my dear friends is the true comfort! A strong persuasion in a future state of existence; a proposition of obviously probable, that, setting revelation aside, every nation and people, so far as investigation has reached, for at least nearly four thousand years, have in some mode or other, firmly believed it. In vain would we reason and pretend to doubt.

'Tis this my friend, that makes our morning bright,  
'Tis this that gilds the horror of our night.  
When wealth forsakes us, and when friends are few—

When friends are faithless, or when foes pursue ;  
'Tis this that wards the blow, or stills the smart—  
Disarms affliction, or repels his dart ;  
Within the breast bids purest raptures rise—  
Bids smiling conscience, spread her cloudless skies.

Reflect much on the excellency and glory of religion. It is a friend in adversity. When every earthly hope fails, and the soul is ready to say of all human helpers, " miserable comforters are ye all ;" then religion is a friend indeed. Are not those blessed, whom God blesses ; safe whom he protects ; and strong, whom he strengthens ? can any one say with David, " The Lord is my refuge, I will not fear, though the earth be removed, and the mountains cast into the midst of the sea ;" or with Paul, " Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord," can any one say this, without being unspeakably happy ?

Through shades and solitudes profound,  
The fainting traveller winds his way ;  
Bewildring meteors glare around,  
And tempt his wandering feet astray :

Welcome, thrice welcome, to his eye,  
The sudden moon's inspiring light,

When forth she sallies thro' the sky,  
The guardian Angel of the night!

Thus mortals, blind and weak below  
Pursue the phantom Bliss, in vain;  
The world's a wilderness of woe,  
And life a pilgrimage of pain!

Till mild RELIGION, from above,  
Descends, a sweet engaging form,  
The messenger of heavenly love,  
The bow of promise in a storm!

The guilty passions wing their flight,  
Sorrow, remorse, affliction cease;  
RELIGION's yoke is soft and light,  
And all her paths are paths of peace.

Ambition, pride, revenge, depart,  
And folly flies her chastening rod;  
She makes the humble contrite heart  
A temple of the living GOD.

Beyond the narrow vale of time,  
Where bright celestial ages roll,  
To scenes eternal, scenes sublime,  
She points the way and leads the soul.

At her approach the Grave appears  
The Gate of Paradise restored;  
Her voice the watching Cherub hears,  
And drops his double-flaming sword.

Baptized with her renewing fire,  
May we the crown of glory gain :  
Rise when the Host of Heaven expire,  
And reign with God, forever reign !

True Religion begins with Christ ; he is our pardon, peace, hope, and everlasting salvation. To sit under his shadow, and by faith experience the fruit of his passion, sweet to our taste, constitutes the sublime happiness of our souls : It is therefore evident, that the first step to our departure from God, and our errors in life, begins at the cross. As by the cross of Christ we are brought nigh to God, and enjoy the sweets of fellowship with him as our Father ; so, a neglect of the virtues of the cross imperceptibly obstructs us in the enjoyment of that high privilege. Our communion with God is carried on by faith, meditation and prayer ; the essence of which is, the secret motion of the soul in peace, adoration, hope, love, and joy ; producing that solid satisfaction and sublime pleasure, which none but he that feels it knows. This experience constitutes our heaven upon earth. We thus walk with God, and never feel ourselves unhappy but when interrupted in this holy path. Whatever affliction may attend us, it is in communion with God that our tears are wiped away, learn the design of every adverse providence, and receive grace to help in time of need.

That a person who, through grace, has enjoyed

the rich manifestations of a Saviour's smiles; and hath been numbered with Christ's visible flock, may be liable to fall into temptation, lose the bloom of his profession, and the comforts of his soul, for a season, is a truth so evident in the scriptures, and so convicting in the conscience, as at once demands our assent and our tears. The loss of sensible communion with God soon discovers itself in the disposition of the mind, and in the actions of the life. The Word of the Lord was precious in those days when the Christian lived near to God: now it is read with indifference, without faith, without prayer, without a desire to find Christ, and a determination to follow his precepts or embrace his promises. In the discharge of domestic duties, the temper is altered; morning and evening prayer becomes formal; and the imperfections of servants and children are passed over without reproof, because the conscience is an accuser of its own sin. Religious conversation, if held at all, is not upon the beauties of Christ, the riches of grace, or the experience of the heart; but, on speculative points, the gift of ministers, the unfortunate miscarriages of others, or the decline of Religion, without producing one effort to revive it in themselves or others. This spiritual decline of heart paves the way for a more general neglect of the means of grace.

But, revolting christian, remember, the sin of your departure from God has been committed with your eyes open.—What ingratitude is this to God

for his love—to Christ for his salvation—and to the Blessed Spirit for his instruction and consolation!—Did you not solemnly devote yourself to be the Lord's at your conversion? and have you not frequently renewed this surrender in private, at your baptism, and at the Lord's Supper—What evil has the Lord done unto you? and wherein has he wearied you? Were not his paths pleasant, his promises sweet, and his smiles charming? In how many scenes of distress has he delivered you? And in the bounty of his providence, and the riches of his grace, how often has he exceeded your highest expectations? What griefs does your present coldness of heart and disobedience of life create in the breast of those who are the friends of Christ, and who knew you when a humble, lively, happy christian?—Neither forget the discouragements which you give to the lambs of the flock who are seeking the paths of the Lord; and the advantage you offer the enemies of the gospel to impeach its virtues.—Surely you cannot be insensible what injury you do your own souls. Are you as happy now as when you delighted beneath the Shepherd's care, and fed in the rich pasture of his grace? O! no. Think, for a moment, were temptations now to assail you, how awfully you might fall, and sink deeper into sin and misery?—If death was now to advance, where is your certain hope of future bliss? Can you shut your eyes, harden your heart, pursue in sin, and abandon the Lord of life? God forbid! There

is a certain something within your breast that fills you with shame, produces a tear, and makes you cry "O that it were with me as in months past!—Lord turn unto me, have mercy upon me, heal my backslidings, let me once more find the way to thine arms; and enjoy that peace I felt when first I knew thy love."

Virtue and Religion are the two permanent pillars which support the fabrick of temporal enjoyments and eternal felicity. Human nature wants something more substantial than mere external objects to constitute happiness; and the possession of these excellencies will render life pleasing in every circumstance, it is not the situation we are in which regulates the feelings. Virtue and Religion must actuate the heart or tranquility will never be enjoyed. The contemplations of a pure mind, and the reflections of an approving conscience, are ingredients sufficient to form a heaven on earth and secure eternal pleasures in the realms of perfection. What can afford more sublime enjoyment, then reflections on that Being who is the friend and guardian of all mankind; Religion is the source which directs the imagination to conception of the charms in that celestial world where God our parent dwells and where complete happiness is enjoyed in its refined original purity. It will be acknowledged that the youthful mind is most calculated to imbibe virtuous precepts. Impressions received when young, are not often eradicated when maturer years direct the understanding. And why

is it not then the most suitable season to form a system of happiness which will accompany us through life, nor forsake us when we die ?—

What can afford a more delightful prospect, than a youth devoting his early life, his undisturbed thoughts, to the pursuits of religion ?—And how rarely are we gratified with such a scene ? Melancholy truth ! that so many who call themselves christians should shun the paths of peace.

Virtue is certainly preferable to error, even in this frail state, were we sure no future rewards would be conferred. But if we extend our views beyond the boundaries of this comfortless world, what superior blessings will be the effects of a life devoted to piety and religion ! With such inducements, such positive assurances as these how inconsistent is man not to attend to the dictates and injunctions of such a heaven-like institution. Some cautiously avoid religion when young through fear of being ridiculed by their acquaintances for being serious. Are we ashamed to confess our love for that Fountain from whence streams of every comfort flow ?—Are we unwilling to be happy ? Religion does not indeed preclude any satisfactory enjoyment ;—It leads us to most honourable and praiseworthy gratifications that vain nature can bestow, or that immaculate heaven can offer.—Sociability, politeness, benevolence and cheerfulness, are all friends to virtue and religion. Nothing can be said by the most puerile and gay, to repel or discourage such a laudable pursuit. Prejudice and su-

perstition are clouds which do not brood over the ideas of a religious man ; they are the offsprings of ignorance : But religion dispels these gloomy vapours, and illuminates the understanding. It consoles the aching heart of the afflicted, reconciles the unhappy to their misfortunes. The grieved parent who has buried his earthly comfort, his darling child, in the bosom of the valley, is comforted and even cheered, by the flattering persuasions of religion. He is assured by it, that if he walks in virtue's ways, he shall revisit his beloved offspring in that blessed place, where dwells every felicity, and an antidote for every care and painful sensation.

Christianity supplies every deficiency of human nature ; satisfies every real want, and gratifies every reasonable desire. What are the real wants and desires of the pious heart ? We are ignorant, bewildered creatures, and need one to instruct and guide us — Christ is the light of the world and will lead us in paths of righteousness. We are guilty creatures, and need forgiveness. In Him we have forgiveness of our sins. We are feeble and helpless, and need support and assistance ; his grace is sufficient for us. We are subjected to many afflictions, and want consolation under them ; and in Him we have strong consolation. We must die, and wish to know whether we shall survive the grave.—Christ has declared, in language suited to the dignity of his character, “ I am the resurrection and the life ; He that believeth on me shall not die forever.—“ Because I live, ye shall live

also." He hath brought life and immortality unto light through his gospel. Who, on this representation of the benefits of the gospel, simple as it is, are not ready to exclaim, "Glory to God in the highest, because there is peace on earth and good will towards man. Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift."

May we embrace this gospel with grateful and ardent affection, as the clearest display of the love of God which passeth knowledge and which will finally accomplish its grand design, completely destroy all the works of the devil; vanquish sin and death; erase all the unhappy effects of man's apostacy, and restore him to holiness and happiness.

False ideas may be entertained of Religion; false and imperfect conceptions of Virtue have often prevailed in the world. But to True Religion there belongs no sullen gloom; no melancholy austerity, tending to withdraw men from humane society, or to diminish the exertions of active virtue. On the contrary, the religious principle, rightly understood, not only unites with all such virtues, but supports, fortifies, and confirms them. It is so far from obscuring the lustre of a character, that it heightens and ennobles it. It adds to all the moral virtues a venerable and authoritative dignity. It renders the virtuous character more august. To the decorations of a palace, it joins the majesty of a temple.

Religion prepares the mind of man for all the events of this inconstant state, and instructs him in the nature of true happiness; early weans him from an un-

due love of the world ; afflictions do not attack him by surprise, and therefore do not overwhelm him. He is equipped for the storm, as well as the calm, in this dubious navigation of life. He is not overcome by disappointment, when that which is mortal dies : when that which is mutual begins to change, and when that which he knew to be transient, passes away.

Religion not only purifies, but also fortifies the heart ; so that the devout man is neither lifted up by success, nor enervated by sensibility ; he meets the changes in his lot without unmanly dejection. He is enured to temperance and restraint. He has learned firmness and self-command. He is accustomed to look up to Supreme Providence, not with reverence only, but with trust and hope.

In prosperity he cultivates his mind ; stores it with useful knowledge, with good principles, and virtuous dispositions. The resources remain entire, when the day of trouble comes. His chief pleasures are always of the calm, innocent and temperate kind, and over those, the charges of the world have the least power. His mind is a kingdom to him, and he can never ab<sup>o</sup>nd it.

O blest Religion, heav'nly fair !

Thy kind thy healing power,  
Can sweeten pain, and soften care,  
And gild each gloomy hour.

'Tis thou can'st make the heathen bless'd,  
And make their darkness light,

Cheer'd by thy blessings, see them rise,  
To hope, to life and light.

'Tis thou can'st sooth their troubled soul,  
In slavery, woe, and pain ;  
And Afric's sons with grateful joy,  
The sacred peace shall gain !

When dismal thoughts, and boding fears,  
The trembling heart invade ;  
And all the face of nature wears  
An universal shade :

Thy sacred dictates can assuage,  
The tempest of the soul ;  
And ev'ry fear shall loose its rage,  
At thy divine controul.

Through life's bewilder'd darksome way,  
Thy hand unerring leads ;  
And o'er the path, thy heav'nly ray,  
A cheering lustre sheds.

When feeble reason, tir'd and blind,  
Sinks helpless and afraid ;  
Thou blest supporter of the mind,  
How powerful is thy aid !

O let my heart confess thy pow'r  
And find thy sweet relief ;  
To brighten ev'ry gloomy hour,  
And soften ev'ry grief.

## LOVE TO GOD.

" Talk they of morals ? O thou bleeding Love !  
Thou maker of new morals to mankind,  
The grand morality is LOVE OF THEE !"

THE blessed God is our most gracious Preserver and Benefactor, and most justly claims our warmest and best affections. He has supported and protected us ever since we have been in existence. He constantly follows us with more than a father's tenderness and compassion. He feeds and clothes us ; he guides and guards us. Who among us can name the day, the hour, or moment, in which he has not been sustained by the arm of God, shielded by his providence, and fostered by his bounty ? His mercies are far more numerous than our moments. And can we withhold our hearts from such a Preserver and Benefactor as this ? Shall the numberless and constantly repeated blessings which he showers down upon us, leave us still unpenetrated, unmelted, insensible, unthankful ? Shall the favors with which he loads us every moment, be every moment prostituted to his dishonor ? No ! while my life is spared by his patience, and comforted by his love, never may I cease to praise him for his unbounded goodness.

Love to God is the essence of personal religion ; without it the most splendid profession is unsatisfying and vain. From the natural relation which subsists between God and the creature, he has a right

to demand our affections. When the Almighty formed man, he enriched his soul with a propensity to love ; and upon the exercise of this passion the basis of human happiness was formed. This claim is consistent with the honour of God, and the interest of his creature, and is supported by an holy and an inflexible law ; the tenor of which is, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy strength. Let the unconverted apply this to their own hearts, and ask, "Have we loved the Lord with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our strength?" Surely they have not. This view of human nature calls for deep humiliation. Not to love God is to be destitute of a pure fountain of happiness, and to be exposed to the awful penalty of death, annexed to the law of our Sovereign. Glory be to God, that GRACE has restored what NATURE has lost!

He that enjoys but the smallest degree of love to God, though he may not be able to recite any remarkable circumstances in his conversion, is able to tell you that there was a time when he did not know nor love God ; and what little he now enjoys is the fruit of great grace. Thus, *we love God because he first loved us*, sent his SON to die for us, and then gave us his SPIRIT, to unite our hearts in love to himself, bearing testimony that unless God had thus loved us we never should have been restored to enjoy the sweets of love to him.

That heart which reviews its own native wretch-

edness by transgression, contemplates the boundless love of God in his salvation, and is brought nigh, by the blood of Christ, to enjoy the smiles of the Everlasting Father, remembers that *he is not his own but bought with a price.* He approaches the Lord by faith and prayer, and adopts the language of David : " Into thine hand I commit my spirit, for thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth." In the retired chamber, at the water of baptism, at the gates of Zion, and at the table of the Lord, the Christian, in lively emotions of heart, resigns himself to be the Lord's for ever : No part of revealed truth but he receives in the love of it; no command which dropped from his Saviour's lips, whether for private or public obedience, but is embraced with affection ; no cross, no suffering, but what he cheerfully welcomes ; knowing that the many waters of affliction cannot quench the flame of his love to God, neither can the floods of temptations drown it. God will ever remain the undeviating Friend and Supporter of all christians who honour and obey him, although for his own best and wise purposes, he conceals from them the knowledge of future events of time.—

" Great God ! I would not ask to see  
What in Futurity shall be ;  
If light and bliss attend my days,  
Then let my future hours be praise.  
Is darkness and distress my share ?

Then let me trust thy guardian care :  
Enough for me, if love divine  
At length through every cloud shall shine."

Man, by transgression, hath prepared for himself a thorny, tempestuous passage through life. It hath, however, pleased the Almighty to draw a kind of veil to conceal from man the certain knowledge of those various and successive events of time, the immediate prospect of which would crush the soul in deep despair. No man can wisely boast of to-morrow ; we know not what a day may bring forth ; no, nor even a moment, or the twinkling of the eye ;—such short transitions of time, are big with the most important events.

Could the merchant foresee the obstructions and the losses attending his eager efforts in trade ; or the husbandman anticipate the blasts that so often attend the labour of his hands, the springs of industry would immediately fail, and society at large become truly necessitous. Who would exult in forming the pleasing connections of social life, were we to know before-hand the blasts of friendship, the assaults of disease, or the period when death would tear from our embraces the objects of our esteem, and lay them in the recess of corruption ?—Were it possible for a man to ascertain, with precision, the moment, the place, the circumstances that should be destined for his own death, what perpetual anxiety and tormenting fear would rage in his breast, and totally render

himself incompetent to discharge the duties of public or private life ! Did such fore-knowledge pervade the mind of man, childhood and youth would bear the sorrows of old age ; the powers of genius would fail ; art be unimproved ; and nature herself unexplored. How little does the busy worldling reflect on his obligation to infinite goodness, for his ability to perform the duties of his station, and that the uncertainty of future events demands his constant dependence upon the pleasure of the Almighty ! Those whose minds are directed to the Supreme, know, that the providence of God is a mystery to man in all ages. It is as the bud which gradually and imperceptibly arises into flower, and then emits its richest fragrance. It is a second bible ; every day, and every moment, like the several leaves of the sacred volume, presenting something new and astonishing to the intelligent observer.

If the observations now made, as they relate to men in common life, be pronounced just, I may venture to add, that the wisdom and goodness of God, in withholding the knowledge of future events, is more highly esteemed by the real Christian than by those whose habit of dissipation deprives them of an ability to observe the dispensations of the Almighty. If God, in the early part of the Christian's life, had uncovered the great deep of the heart ; exposed the secret evils that lodge within it ; or had given the good man a view of the imperfections, disappointments, temptations, crosses, and sorrows that awaited him, how

would his soul have trembled at the awful prospect, and bowed himself to the very dust of the earth ! The Christian sometimes ascends the mount of contemplation ; surveys the map of his past experience ; remembers the way which the Lord his God hath led him ; and in the review, his soul is filled with profound astonishment ! So many winding, thorny paths,—seas of tribulation,—dreary deserts,—mountains of difficulty,—valleys of humiliation ! My God ! says he, and drops the silent tear, can I have passed through such ways as these ? Is it possible ! Surely had I known the path, my feet had never made the choice. It was thou, my God, my Saviour, and my Guide, that safely brought me through ; nor can I now distrust thy future care. Secure beneath thy sacred wings I shall pass my fleeting days ; finish my course with joy ; walk through the shades of death, and mount to Zion's hill above, to celebrate thy praise !

When we say to God, that we love him with all our heart, 'tis often a mere form of words, without truth or meaning. Men learn it when they are young, and they continue to use it when they are grown up, without thinking of what they say. To love God, is to have no other will but his ! to keep faithfully his law, and have in abhorrence all violation of it. To love God, is to love what Christ loved, poverty, humiliations, and sufferings ; it is to hate what he hated, the world and its vanities : can we be said to love an object which we do not

desire to resemble ? To love God, is to desire to converse with him, to wish to go to him, to sigh and languish after him. That is but a feigned love, which does not desire to see the Beloved.

Thou art the Way—and he who sighs,  
 Amid this starless waste of woe,  
 To find a pathway to the skies,  
 A light from heaven's eternal glow—  
 By thee must come, thou gate of love,  
 Through which the saints undoubted trod ;  
 Till faith discovers, like the dove,  
 An ark, a resting place in God.

Thou art the Truth—whose steady day  
 Shines on through earthly blight and bloom ;  
 The pure the everlasting ray,  
 The lamp that shines e'en in the tomb ;  
 The light that out of darkness springs,  
 And guideth those that blindly go ;  
 The word whose precious radiance flings  
 Its lustre upon all below.

Thou art the Life—the blessed Well,  
 With living waters gushing o'er,  
 Which those that drink shall ever dwell  
 Where sin and thirst are known no more ;  
 Thou art the mystick pillar giv'n,  
 Our lamp by night; our light by day ;  
 Thou art the sacred Bread from Heav'n ;  
 Thou art the Life—the Truth—the Way.

Our Lord *came to bring fire upon the earth*, and desired that fire might overspread it. Yet men live in a deadly coldness and indifference. They love money, buildings and titles ; they love even the meanest and most contemptible things ; but divine love rarely finds a place in their hearts. Do thou, O Lord, vindicate thy right in us, notwithstanding our infidelities : let the fire of thy love extinguish all other fires. What can we see lovely out of thee, which is not to be found in its full perfection in thee, O ! thou fountain of all good ! Grant us but the grace to love thee, and we shall then love thee only, thee eternally.

Can we know Thee, and not love Thee, Thou who surpasses all that created nature can comprehend, in beauty, in grateness, in power, in goodness, in liberality, in magnificence, in every kind of perfection, and (which most nearly affects me) in love for me ! It should seem, that an awful reference, and the distance there is between us, should stop me : but thou permittest me, thou commandest me to love thee.

What ! shall it be said, that vain lovers here below carry their extravagant passion to an excess of delicacy ; and art thou to be loved but feebly, and with limitation ? No, my God, profane love ought not to excel the divine. Shew what thou canst do in a heart wholly devoted to thee, thou hast full access to it, thou knowest all its springs, and what thy grace is capable of exciting in it. Thou ex-

pectest only consent, and the surrender of my free will. I give them both to thee more often than the day. Accept them, O Lord, and exert in them thy divine power: Poor and feeble creature as I am, I have nothing to give thee, but my love. Do thou increase it, O Lord, and make it worthy of thee. O that I were capable of doing great things for thy sake! O that I had some great sacrifice to make to thee! But all that I can do is nothing. On the bed of sickness it is thee alone that has comforted and sustained me, and under my many severe afflictions hast enabled me to say—*O Lord thy will and not mine be done.*

THE Lord is my Shepherd, my guardian and guide;  
Whatsoever I want he will kindly provide:  
Ever since I was born, it is he that hath crown'd  
The life that he gave me with blessings all round:  
While yet on the breast, a poor infant I hung,  
E'er time had unloosen'd the strings of my tongue,  
He gave me the help, which I could not then ask:  
Now therefore to thank him shall be my tongues task.

Thro' my tenderest years, with as tender a care,  
My soul like a lamb, in his bosom he bare,  
To the brook he would lead me whene'er I had need,  
And point out the pasture where best I might feed.  
No harm could approach me for he was my shield,  
From the fowls of the air, and the beasts of the field;  
The wolf to devour me, would often time prowl,  
But the Lord was my Shepherd, and guarded my soul.

Whensoe'er at a distance, he sees me afraid,  
He skips o'er the mountains, and comes to my aid.  
Then leads me back gently, and bids me abide,  
In the midst of his flock, and feed close by his side.  
How safe in his keeping, how happy and free,  
Could I always remain, where he bids me to be,  
Yea, blest are the people, and happy thrice told,  
That obey the Lord's voice and abide in his fold:

The fold it is full and the pasture is green,  
All is friendship and love, and no enemy seen,  
There the Lord dwells amongst us, upon his own hill,  
With the flocks all around him awaiting his will.  
Himself in the midst with a provident eye,  
Regarding our wants and procuring supply,  
An abundance springs up of each nourishing bud,  
And we gather his gifts and are filled with good.

At his voice or example, we move or we stay,  
For the Lord is himself both our leader and way,  
The hills smoak with Incense where'er he hath trod,  
And a sacred perfume shews the footsteps of God.  
While blest with his presence the vallies beneath,  
A sweet smelling savour incessantly breathe,  
The delight is renewed of each sensible thing,  
And behold in their bloom all the beauties of spring.

Or if a quite different scene he prepare,  
And we march thro' the wilderness barren and bare,  
By his wonderful works we see plainly enough,  
That the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof,

If we hunger and thirst, and are ready to faint,  
A relief in due season prevents our complaint ;  
The rain at his word brings us food from the sky,  
And racks become rivers when we are adry.

From the fruitfulest hill, or the barrenest rock,  
The Lord hath made all for the sake of his flock,  
And the flock in return the Lord always confess  
In plenty their joy, their hope in distress.  
He beholds in our welfare, his glory display'd,  
And we find ourselves blest, in obedience repaid,  
With a cheerful regard, we attend to his ways,  
Our attention is prayer, and our cheerfulness praise.

The Lord is my shepherd, what then shall I fear,  
What dangers can frighten me whilst he is near ?  
Nor when the time calls me, to walk through the vale,  
Of the shadow of Death shall my heart ever fail,  
Tho' afraid of myself, to persue the dark way,  
Thy rod and thy staff be my comfort and stay ;  
For I know on thy guidance when once it is past,  
To a fountain of life it will bring me at last.

The Lord has become, my salvation and song,  
His blessings shall follow me all the life long ;  
Whatsoever condition he places me in,  
I am sure 'tis the best it could ever have been.  
For the Lord he is good, and his mercies are sure,  
He only afflicts me, in order to cure ;  
The Lord will I praise while I have my breath,  
Be content in sickness, and resign'd at my death.

## HEAVEN.

THE rose is sweet, but it is surrounded with thorns : the lily of the valley is fragrant, but it springs up amongst the brambles. The spring is pleasant, but it is soon past : the summer is bright, but the winter destroys its beauty. The rainbow is very glorious, but it soon vanishes away : life is good, but it is soon swallowed up in death.

There is a land where the roses are without thorns, where the flowers are not mixed with brambles. In that land, there is eternal springs, and light without any cloud. The tree of life grows in the midst thereof ; rivers of pleasure are there, and flowers that never fade. Myriads of happy spirits are there, and surround the throne of GOD with a perpetual hymn. The angels with their golden harps sing praises continually, and the cherubims fly on wings of fire !— This country is Heaven : it is the country of those that are good ; and nothing that is wicked must inhabit there. The toad must not spit its venom amongst turtle-doves ; nor the poisonous henbane grow amongst sweet flowers. Neither must any one that does ill enter into that good land.

This earth is pleasant, for it is God's earth, and it is filled with many delightful things. But that country is far better : there we shall not grieve any more ; there the cold of winter shall not wither us, nor the heats of summer scorch us. In that country there are no wars, nor quarrels, but all love one another with dear love.

When our parents and friends die, and are laid in the cold ground, we see them here no more ; but there we shall embrace them again, and live with them, and be separated no more. There we shall meet all good men, whom we read of in holy books. There we shall see Abraham, the called of God, the father of the faithful ; and Moses after his long wanderings in the Arabian desert ; and Elijah, the prophet of God ; Daniel, who escaped the lion's den ; and there the son of Jesse, the shepherd king, the sweet singer of Israel. They loved God on earth ; they praised him on earth ; but in that country they will praise him better, and love him more.

There we shall see Jesus, who is gone before us to that happy place ; and there we shall behold the glory of the high God. We cannot see him here, but we will see him there. We must be now on earth, but we will often think on heaven. The happy land is our home : we are to be here but for a little while, and there for ever, even for eternal ages.

There is a sweet enthusiastic melancholy that sometimes steals upon the soul—even thought itself is for a while suspended, and every scene in nature seems to wear an image of the mind. How delightful are the sensations at such a time ! though felt, they cannot be described ; it is a kind of anticipation of those pleasures we are taught to expect hereafter ; the soul seems entirely abstracted from every earthly idea, wrapped up in the contemplation of future happiness. Ask yourself in one of these moments what

there is in this world worth a thought ; and you will answer, nothing : its sublunary pleasure is but a dream, and vanishes like a shadow. This should convince us more than any thing, that there is a future state.—Our souls are formed to taste higher delights, more refined sensations than any thing in this life can excite ; and something from within tells us we shall one day enjoy them ; else why these ideas ? why these expectations ? of what use would be those noble sentiments, with which the mind is sometimes impressed, if we were only to act an insignificant part for a few years in this life, and then sink into nothing ? No, there must be a future state, and that immortal ! 'Tis HEAVEN itself that points out an hereafter, and intimates eternity to man.

" This world is all a fleeting show."

There is an hour of peaceful rest,  
To mourning wand'lers given ;  
There is a tear for souls distrest  
A balm for every wounded breast—  
'Tis found above—in Heaven.

There is a soft, a downy bed,  
'Tis fair as breath of even ;  
A couch for weary mortals spread,  
Where they may rest the aching head  
And find repose in Heaven,

There is a house for weeping souls,  
By sin and sorrow driven ;

When lost on life's tempestuous shoals,  
When storms arise and ocean rolls,  
And all is dread—but Heaven !

There faith lifts up the tearful eye,  
The heart with anguish riven ;  
And views the tempest passing by,  
The evening shadows quickly fly  
And all serene in—Heaven.

There fragrant flowers immortal bloom,  
And joys supreme are given ;  
There rays divine, disperse the gloom,  
Beyond the confines of the tomb,  
Appears the dawn of Heaven !—

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### ADDRESS TO YOUTH.

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#### MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS,

WHILE I see so many of your number, living without affording the least evidence that you are the children of God, fast hastening to the eternal world, I cannot forbear calling unto those of you who are yet impenitent, to stop a moment and consider, while I endeavour to place before you a few motives, to induce you to attend immediately to your everlasting interest.

Consider that your Christian friends earnestly desire your salvation. They see your danger. They know and feel, that unless your hearts are renewed by the grace of God, unless you become new creatures, your souls, must be lost. It is with pain that

they see you in the pursuit of sinful pleasures, trifling away your precious time, and treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath, preparing for a more aggravated doom. They exhort you, they weep and pray for you night and day; they long to rejoice over you, as the new-born heirs of heaven. And my dear friends, must they exhort, must they weep, must they pray, and all in vain? O do not despise their reproof. Let them embrace you as children, and fellow heirs of the grace of life. Let their hearts be made glad, by seeing you turning from your childish follies, and accepting the offers of eternal life.

The Angels in heaven desire your salvation. Yes, and their golden harps are now tuned to raise louder the song of joy for one of you that will repent. Will you not be the first to cause the arches of heaven to re-echo, that another wanderer has returned, that another lost sheep is found? Give Christ the affections of your heart, and angels will be to you ministering spirits, will succour and relieve you when in trouble, and at death will attend you to glory. Shall the holy angels long for your salvation, and will you give yourselves no concern about it? But there is yet a more exalted Being who desires your salvation; for,

Christ himself desires it. His ministry and sufferings, while on earth, establish this truth. "He was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;" that you might find a way of escape from the wrath to come. He declares that "he is not willing that any

should perish, but that all should come to repentance." "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die?" His agony in the garden, and his sufferings on the cross, exhibit the strongest proofs, that he desires the salvation of your souls. He calls you by his Word, by his Providence, and by his Spirit ; and must he call in vain ? Will you not listen, my dear friends, to his gracious offer ? shall he desire that you may be holy, and in that way happy, and you still continue to travel, unconcerned, in the ways of rebellion, down to ruin ? Is it nothing to you, that the hill of Calvary was clothed with the precious blood of the Son of God ; that he there bore the wrath of Jehovah for your sins ? O heart of adamant, that will not be moved by such condescension, suffering and love ! O stupid soul, that can behold with indifference the "Son of God in tears," offering himself a sacrifice, for the redemption of guilty rebellious man !

Yes, dear youth, your Christian friends, the Angels in heaven, and Christ himself, all desire your salvation ; and how will you regard these desires ? Shall they be gratified, or will you still turn a deaf ear ? Ah, no, I cannot indulge the thought, that you, my dear friends, will treat the desires of such beings with total indifference, while your own best good is their ultimate object.

Consider the glories of heaven. Of these we can have but a faint conception, while sojourning in bodies

of clay. That heaven is a place of unalloyed happiness and ineffable glory, the Scriptures plainly assert. "There is the throne of God and the Lamb, with the pure river of water of life proceeding therefrom ; and there saints and angels unite in ascribing "glory and honour, dominion and power, to him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb for ever." There your departed Christian friends are at this moment mingling their voices with the heavenly host, in shouting Alleluiah, Alleluiah, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth." There they unite in crying "holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." It is there, dear youth, that the humble penitent at last arrives. There is the consummation of all his happiness. There he takes his fill of pleasure, for ever to increase with his capacity : and it is there that the angels wait to rejoice at your conversion.

The Lord Jesus now looks upon you and pities you. Look upon yourselves, think of your sinful feelings, and thoughts, and conduct—think how sinful you have been to forget and disobey God—think how impossible it will be for you to answer one of a thousand of your transgressions—think with what shame and terror you would stand before the bar of God without a Saviour. Compare your feeling and your conduct with the life of the holy Jesus. Can you count the number, can you measure the ill desert, can you bear the burden of your sins? Look where you will, can you find a friend to bear

this heavy load? Ask your father; ask your loving mother. Alas! they find their own sins too heavy to be borne. They love you, but they cannot help you. All they can do, is, to lead you onward to the Almighty Saviour. To whom will you go but to Him? He has the words of eternal life.

Yes, my dear young friends, your only security is to come to Jesus; to enter the kingdom of heaven. How often have you been put to shame before your parents, when they have called you to account for your faults. Do you think if you were now to die, you could stand shameless and fearless at the bar of God? Could you make a sufficient excuse for all your faults? Dare you within five minutes present yourselves to answer for your sins before the Judge, and to take the sentence for an endless eternity? Oh think of the endlessness of eternity; of the endlessness of eternal sorrow? Would you not rather have "peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ?" Would you not rather be found encircled within the walls of his kingdom, and there safely and joyfully spend eternity, an endless eternity, as the children of God, and equal to the Angels."

Attend to the counsels of heavenly wisdom, and heavenly love. Seriously ponder some of those numberless arguments which invite and urge you to *give your hearts to God*. Consider, in the first place, that God himself enjoins this on you, very *particularly* and *expressly*. He enjoins it with all the authority of a

Sovereign, and all the tenderness of a Father. How solemn and affectionate the command—"Remember now thy Creator, in the days of thy youth while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, in which thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them." "Come ye children," says David, speaking in the name, and by the authority of God; "hearken unto me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord." And what a melting exhortation does the Holy Spirit put into the mouth of the same venerable man, when, bowing under the weight of years, he was just about to resign his throne and crown!—"And then, Solomon, my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind. If thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off forever." Similar exhortations are found scattered, in great numbers, through the whole scripture. Since then God has been pleased so frequently and expressly to enjoin it on the young to devote themselves to his fear and service without delay, their obligations to do this must be peculiar; and peculiar their guilt, if they refuse. If they would not treat infinite excellence with disregard, and infinite authority with contempt, they must devote to their God their first years, the fresh, unwasted vigor of their faculties, and their affections.

God has frequently signified, in his word, that youthful religion is peculiarly pleasing and acceptable to him. "I love them that love me," says the divine Redeemer; "and those that seek me early shall

find me." What a gracious notice did he take, in the days of his flesh, even of young children, when he said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God." How kindly did he receive to his arms those little ones which were brought to him, and lay his hands on them, and bless them! These, and other passages of similar aspect, shew that the blessed God takes a peculiar pleasure in the religion of youth, and of children; that he smiles with singular complacency on their early dedication to him, and that he is ready to assist, with his gracious influence, their first serious attempts in his service. Surely, these are animating and inspiring thoughts. Has the glorious God condescended to give such kind encouragement to the young to seek him without delay—to give him their hearts without reserve? Their language then should be; "Thy face, Lord, will we seek. To thee will we unreservedly devote our hearts, ourselves, our all." They should earnestly implore the father of mercies, that he would take entire possession of their hearts, form them by his grace, and fill them with his love. They must be cold and insensible indeed, if such a sublime object does not fire their minds; if they are not animated with a sacred ambition to be every thing which the blessed God would have them be, and to choose the things which please him.

God is infinitely deserving of our earliest affection, and obedience. Since he is a being transcendently

gloriously and amiable, he indispensably claims our supreme, our earliest, and our constant regard.—There is no moment of our existence, in which we are not bound by the strongest obligations to love him with all our hearts. Why then should the payment of that tribute which is every moment due, be for a single moment delayed? What can be more natural, then for the child to fly to the arms of his parent, and repose on his bosom his tenderest thoughts and affections? And should not the offspring of the God of heaven, every moment watched by his care, and nourished by his bounty, devote to their heavenly Parent and Benefactor, the fair morning of their existence—their earliest love, and earliest obedience? His adorable perfections, and the relations which they bear to him, render him infinitely worthy this tribute. And every moment they withhold it, they rob the Supreme Jehovah of his due. They practically deny that he has any property in them—any sovereignty over them.

In youth, the affections are warm and tender. The mind is peculiarly susceptible of impressions; and the heart is powerfully attracted to those objects which appear sublime, beautiful and lovely. How melancholy, that at this golden period it should entertain no lively sense of the excellence of the blessed God!—that it should feel no ardent desires and aspirations after the *Supreme Beauty*, and the *Supreme Good*! O my young friends! Can you be content to pursue the objects and enjoyments of the world

with such a relish ; and yet have no warm and vigorous affections to give to your God ? Can you feel yourselves captivated by human, fading charms ; and yet be insensible to the transcendent excellence of the being of beings ? Shall the kindness of an earthly friend attract and reach your gratitude ; and can you treat the bleeding love of Jesus with thankless indifference ?—Cold and insensible indeed is that heart which is a stranger to religion. It is lost to the best feelings, the sweetest and the noblest sensibilities which can possess the human bosom.

It is much to be feared that those who pass over the season of youth without religion, will be strangers to it forever. We would not limit the grace of heaven: Nor would we drive the aged sinner to despair. He is in the hand of God and *with God nothing is impossible.* Yet the melancholy apprehension just suggested, is but too well confirmed by the ordinary course of divine dealings with mankind. Indeed, it perfectly corresponds with the nature of the case. The period of youth is most exempt from worldly cares, anxieties and engagements. It affords, of course, the best opportunities for giving a vigorous and undistracted attention to the things of religion, and for devoting all the ardor and energy of the soul to the love and service of God. But when persons have once plunged into the solicitude and employments of the world, they have ordinarily little time or thought to bestow on the *one thing needful.* And too often is it the case, that if it has been neglected till

this anxious and busy period, it is neglected to the last. Besides, the longer persons have lived destitute of serious religion, the more disagreeable and difficult it becomes of course. In youth, the conscience is comparatively tender, and alive to the discharge of its office. The heart is then more susceptible of serious impressions. And there is reason to believe that the monitions of the Holy Spirit are ordinarily more frequent and powerful. But a long continuance in sin naturally hardens the heart, it stupifies the conscience, and renders its reproofs and remonstrances more feeble, and unfrequent. God has said, " My spirit shall not always strive with man ;"—an awfully alarming declaration ! Wo to the man, the woman, the child, from whom the Spirit of God, long resisted and provoked, he finally withdraws ! Hence ensues, in a more fearful degree, that hardness of heart, that blindness of mind, and insensibility of conscience, which are but the too certain indications of approaching destruction.

All opportunities for attending to religion, beside the present, are totally uncertain. Nothing is more common than procrastination in this great concern ; yet nothing is more dangerous ; nothing more frequently fatal. That *convenient season*, never present, yet ever in imagination near, has lured thousands to their eternal ruin. The young are too generally prone to expect a long life, and to flatter themselves that they will have sufficient opportunity to secure religion hereafter, tho' the present should be neglec-

ted. Vain flatteries ! Delusive expectations,— For how often has the giddy, unprepared youth been summoned into eternity, just as he was laying the deepest plans, and indulging the fondest expectations, of worldly happiness ? O the unutterable folly, guilt and wretchedness of such a case ! Be warned, then, ye careless youth, who have neglected religion hitherto, and neglect it no longer. As you value your immortal souls ; as you would not pluck down ruin on your heads, procrastinate no farther the all-important business.

My dear young friends—we are all dying creatures.—We have seen many of our friends and relatives laid in the grave ; many as young as ourselves and apparently as likely to live. Some we have seen carried off by long and lingering diseases, and some cut down suddenly without warning. God only knows when we are to follow them into the eternal world. We know not the day of our death. Our times are in God's hand. It may be to night. We are certain the moment of death must come. We are certain it can be at no great distance : but we know not how near. Look around you, call up to your fond remembrance your sister and your brother, your bosom companion, your schoolmate ; but a little while ago they were as gay, as blooming, as fondly anticipating years of felicity to come as you can possibly be at this mement : but where are they ? You behold their blooming countenances no more ; you can hold no converse with them ; you will form

no more plans of amusement or recreation with them forever. And, my young friends, let me ask you, are you more secure from the stroke of death than these your once loved companions were? No, you must confess you are not; reflect on eternity then, and may the Holy Spirit help you to ask your own soul this important question:—Am I preparing for an everlasting abode in one of those two states; for remember, there is no middle state. Let me entreat you to turn to the word of eternal truth, and carefully examine the scriptures on this point, for it is of the first of importance to your immortal souls. Permit me to repeat the solemn truth—there is no middle way. There are but two paths, the broad and the narrow. Are you then, my young friends, preparing for life eternal? If so, the Spirit of God has effected a gracious change on your soul; you are changed from a careless prayerless sinner to a reflecting praying soul; what but free unmerited mercy effected this change, and what but the same mercy can carry on the great work. Ever bear in mind, that without holiness of life and conversation, all our profession of religion must be vain; yet remember the only foundation for holy practice is an active living faith in Christ Jesus, for it has pleased the Father that in him all fulness should dwell. Or are you, my young friends, awful consideration! preparing, by contempt of God's word, profanation of his sabbaths, scoffing at his people, and total rejection of the only remedy pro-

vided by infinite love and compassion for persisting sinners, by sinful practices and vicious habits, for everlasting punishment, where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched, but where the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever. Where the wrath that is poured out will be still wrath to come, through the countless ages of vast eternity.

Presumptuous youth, and canst thou dare  
The mighty vengeance of a God  
Whose arm can crush thy guilty soul ;  
Where mercy ne'er can interpose.

Ah ! turn thine eyes, behold yon scene—  
A Saviour's arms extended wide ;  
Behold that stream of sacred blood ;  
Go wash in yonder purple tide.  
Jesus, for rebels bore the curse,  
Endured the cross, despised the shame,  
By faith lost sinners now receive  
Pardon and peace, in Jesus' name.

Oh ! my dear young friends, if you withstand the many calls and warnings that you have from day to day, and turn a deaf ear to the entreaties of your friends and the wooings of your Saviour, miserable must be your condition throughout eternal ages. Seek the religion of Jesus Christ, and you will be prepared for life, you will be prepared for death, and a glorious immortality beyond the grave. Remember that we must all appear before the judge-

ment seat of Christ, to give an account of the things done in the body, whether they be good or bad—of all our secret thoughts known only to ourselves : of all our secret actions, which no eye saw, but the all seeing eye of the omniscient Judge. He keeps a book of remembrance, in which every evil thought word and work is registered : every one of which will then be brought forth, to our eternal confusion ; unless they are washed away in the precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. We read, Rev. vi, 16, that some in that day will call on the rocks and the mountains, “ Fall on us and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb.” God grant it may be not your case nor mine. But in order to avoid this dreadful state, we must “ seek the Lord while he may be found, and call upon him while he is near : the wicked must forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and return unto the Lord, and he *will* have mercy upon him, and to our God, and he *will* abundantly pardon ” This is the day of grace. But it will be too late to seek for mercy when the day of judgment comes.—If you die without an interest in Christ, it had been good for you if you had never been born ; for it would be better to have had no existence at all, than to have a miserable existence for ever. This must be the portion of every unpardoned, unconverted sinner.—God hath said it, who cannot lie.

Remember, my dear young friends, that it is not

your own happiness alone which is concerned, but the happiness of many around you; perhaps of thousands and millions yet unborn. Need you be reminded of the tender anxieties of your PARENTS on your behalf? Need you be told how much,—how very much of their earthly comfort depends on you? Probably you may be instrumental, either to impart joy to their dying pillow, or to bring down their grey hairs with sorrow to the grave! But look into a wider sphere. Should you rise into life destitute of the fear of God, you will be incumbrances on society, and too probably its pests and corrupters. Your evil example may ruin others. You may be the unhappy instruments of leading thousands down, with yourselves, to the regions of endless despair. The thought is full of insupportable horror. Think, on the other hand, how great must be your honor and happiness, to rise up, and be blessings to all around you; ornaments to society; pillars in the church of God; instruments of preserving and perpetuating in a thankless world, the name and religion of Jesus: of diffusing the saving light of his gospel among thousands and millions whom you will never see? Do not these sublime objects penetrate and rouse your inmost souls? Do not your youthful bosoms burn with a generous ambition thus to approve yourselves the friends of God and man—the benefactors of the present and of future ages?

And now beloved youth suffer me to ask you one serious all-interesting question. Have you ever giv-

en your hearts to the blessed God? Have you ever devoted to that being who is transcendently glorious in himself, and who has been to you the best of fathers and of friends, your tenderest and most exalted affections? If you have not; if to this moment, you have never felt one sentiment of genuine love to the God who made you; if, in refusing him your hearts, you have refused him every thing which he will accept; if your lives which have been so crowded with the evidences of his compassion and care, have been spent in a series of disobedience and rebellion against him. O how shall I address you? Must not your hearts condemn you? Must not the very thought of such unnatural, aggravated guilt fill you with horror? Say, is not that being worthy of your best affections, whom all the angels in heaven adore—the being who called you into existence, and holds you in life—the being from whose kind hand comes every blessing you have or hope for—the being who notwithstanding all your ingratitude and disobedience, bears with you with astonishing patience, permits you to walk his earth, and breathe his air—nay more, who incessantly guards you by night and day, and visits you every moment with numberless blessings—nay more than *this*, the being who has given his only beloved *Son* to die for rebel men; and who, through him, offers pardon, peace, life, and immortal glory to the very chief of sinners. O think how unnatural, how monstrous it is, to treat with disregard and neglect such a being as this. Think

too, how wretched must be your condition, while you continue in this state of mind. Such a temper must pollute and poison every source of enjoyment. And how miserable must you be in the season of affliction, if you have no refuge in God—no hearts to come like children, and pour your sorrows at the throne of grace. And alas ! what preparation have you to die ? Where, if this hateful disposition remains unsubdued, must you spend your eternity ? Where but in the company of those rebellious and miserable spirits in whose guilt you have participated ? Reflect at the same time on the infinite and innumerable obligations which bind you to make an immediate, an entire and everlasting surrender of yourselves to the ever blessed Jehovah. Stand astonished at that long suffering mercy of his, which waits even now, to receive, to bless, to save you forever. Let that mercy melt your hard hearts, and irresistibly reclaim you from all your guilty wanderings. Return, ye prodigals, to your Father's house. His arms are open, his heart is open to receive you. Are you guilty ? He will pardon you. Are you naked ? He will clothe you. Are you polluted ? He will cleanse you. He will bless you in time ; he will sustain you in death ; and in the regions above, he will give you to inherit joys large as your desires, and immortal as your souls.

Precious Youth—Will you read a few lines attentively, remembering that they were written for *you*, with a desire to promote your happiness. In the 34th Psalm, David recommends religion to the

young, on account of the many blessings which attend it, and the great happiness which it ensures. "Come, ye children," says he, "harken unto me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord." He afterwards tells them, if they keep their tongue from evil, and their lips from speaking guile; if they depart from evil and do good; if they seek peace and pursue it; then the ears of Jehovah will be open to their prayer; while "the face of the Lord is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth." Now, consider, dear youth, is it not a great favour to have God hear your prayers, and grant your requests? You may be taken very sick; you may have distressing pains; your dear parents may weep over your bed, and do all they can to give you ease; but their efforts are insufficient; medicines do not afford you relief; every means employed for your comfort fails. Your dear mother takes your hand, and sighs over her beloved child in vain; brothers and sisters weep around you in vain. Now, to have a friend who can, and, if it is for your best good, will give you immediate relief, will put underneath his sustaining arms, and make all your bed in your sickness, what a comfort! and who can this kind friend be but God? He is the Almighty Physician. Diseases are his servants: when He says, "go," they obey; when He says to the destroying angel, "stay thine hand," he stops, and the sufferer is relieved.

When you are thus suffering pain and sickness,

and want God to give you ease, you cannot expect he will do it, unless you pray to him. And if you wish to know how to pray to him in sickness, and desire that he should hear your prayer, you must learn to pray while in health. So that when you are sick, you may have comfort, which nothing else can give.

But I fear, dear youth, you are too apt to think there is no happiness in religion, but that it will deprive you of your amusements. You are often disappointed in your worldly pleasures ! you are not satisfied with them ; you are continually seeking some new method of diversion. Now you have not tried religion among your various pursuits ; you have not discovered what pleasure there is in that. Why will you not try it ? Do not all truly pious persons tell you that they would not give up their religious enjoyments, to possess all the riches, honours, and pleasures earth can yield ? 'Tis the greatest comfort to have a God to go to at all times, especially in trouble, when no one else can relieve.

Have you pious parents, my dear young friends ? Will you wound their hearts by disobedience, when they have done and suffered more for you than you can ever realize ? Do you love them ; and can you bear to be separated forever from them ? When absent on a short visit, you long and wait impatiently for their return. With joy you hear their carriage wheels, and run to meet and welcome them. You will meet them at the bar of judgment ; and will you

give them cause then to say, "Lord, here are the children thou hast given us ; but they would not hearken to our reproofs and instructions ; they deserve thy displeasure ; and, Lord, we must now submit them to thy righteous will." How will you then feel, to have not even your parents to intercede in your behalf ; but looking on, while you are separated from them, and from the happiness of heaven, and sent to the darkness of an everlasting night. In vain will you cling to your parents or pious friends. Their protection will be in vain ; they cannot lend it then ; but having warned you on the earth to flee from the wrath to come, and loving their God more than you, they must then resign you to his disposing will. On earth, they longed for your salvation ; but they will then see that God is just in your destruction. Do stop, and consider these things, for they will surely come : "the appointed hour makes haste ;" and, while you consider, resolve, (asking God to give you strength,) that you will henceforth give yourself away to Him and his service, and will love and imitate that blessed Jesus, who suffered more than you can know, to induce you to take him for your only Saviour, for your portion in life, your peace in death, and your everlasting felicity. Then, then will you be found at last among that blessed number, who shall stand at God's right hand, and be welcomed among the happy spirits of the just, to dwell forever, where sickness is not known, sorrow shall never come, and the blessed God himself shall wipe away every tear from every eye.

My young friends—do you not reflect that time is progressive, and that every past year is to us a year of added life ; which, of consequence, is so much substracted from the period of our mortal existence ? But, in general, how improvident are we of time, though it is not in our power to recal or retard it ! We can scarce say, that the present moment is our own, so soon is it elapsed ; and who can tell that we shall enjoy the next ? This present moment—this *now*—if I may so express myself, is but an instant of time, betwixt that which is *past*, and that which is in *future*. While we are reflecting upon it, it is gone, and is immediately succeeded by another. If, then, time is so rapid and fugacious, how incumbent is it on us to improve the present hour, that when it be past, we may not be subject to the disagreeable reflection of having misemployed it ! For how painful must be the retrospect, if we should be so unhappy as to contemplate, not hours, but days and years, or perhaps the greatest part of life, dissipated in indolence, in pleasure, and in the neglect of every christian and social duty. A review of this kind must be productive of painful sensations. And there is no person, however harrassed with the cares and vexations of business, or the repeated calls of diversion, but will be obliged, in some solitary moment, to submit to a self-examination. Every age of human life demands it.

To old age bitter must be the reflection of a mis-spent life. They, who should arrive to this last

stage of mortality, if their former years have been spent in vice or folly, will find no consolation in looking back to the years which are past and gone. The pains of the body will be increased by the anguish of the mind. They will be deprived of the comfortable solace arising from reflections like these.—“ In my youth I remembered my Creator. I have neither treated his laws, nor the ordinances of religion, with irreverence or disrespect.”

As your prospects close not with the present life, but are extended to the future, it is necessary that you should make a provision, for that also. Piety is amiable in youth. Postpone not the business of Religion, till old age creeps upon you, or till the night overtakes you—the night of death—*when no man can work*. Will not the early offerings of our minds, whilst in their strength and vigour, be more acceptable to our Creator, than the feeble efforts of a decayed understanding, or the tribute of affections unanimated by the lively feelings of love and gratitude?

Thus, my young friends, I have endeavoured to lay before you, some of the motives, to induce you to attend, without delay, to the concerns of your souls. There might be added many more; but if these are not sufficient to arouse you from your awful lethargy, you have great reason to tremble, and to be alarmed at your stupidity. Now you have a day of grace.—Now the saints are praying for you! the Angels of God wait to rejoice over you; the Lord Jesus Christ,

by his Word and by his Spirit, is intreating you to come ; the glories of heaven are offered you ; the miseries of hell are unveiled to your view : while the worth of your soul, the rapid approach of death, and the awful solemnities of a Judgment day, urge you to make haste, to escape for your life from the destruction which awaits you. O my friends, as you value your eternal good, I intreat you to awake from this dangerous slumber. Arise and go to Jesus. Go to him a humble beggar, penitent and believing. None such were ever sent empty away. While you tarry, your sins are accumulating, your danger is increasing. Delay a little longer, and your soul, your precious, immortal soul, is lost for ever.

E. P.

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POETICAL PRODUCTIONS AND SELECTIONS OF  
Miss ELIZA PERKINS.

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*My days are passed away as the swift ships.*

Job 9, 26.

Yes, dark is the storm beaten mariner's way,  
As o'er the blue bosom of ocean he glides ;  
But darker the tempest of life's fleeting day,  
And colder the storm that hangs over its tides.

Poor wanderer ! thy rest is the rest of the grave,  
No hour shall thy dawning of pleasure restore,  
For the beam which at morning illumin'd the wave,  
Now sinks into darkness and lights thee no more.

And thus shall the soul that is bound to the world,  
And drinks the sweet draughts of its pleasures a-  
while ;  
At eve be afar on its dark waters hurl'd,  
The slave of its fondness, betray'd by its smile.

Yet how can that bosom unheeding resign,  
The hope it has cherish'd, the joys it has known !  
Should no beam from on high with effulgence di-  
vine,  
Shed its light on the path where we wand'r alone !

O Thou, who with goodness unceasing, divine,  
Do'st calm the rude waves of the merciless sea ;  
May this bosom, whatever its trials, be thine,  
And where'er it shall wander be fix'd upon thee !

Then long may the wild warring elements rave,  
They move not the soul from its tranquil abode ;  
For sure as the Rock of Salvation can save,  
The spirit exalted, ascends to its God.

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### *THE CHRISTIAN'S HOPE.*

'Tis not in wealth's vain, glittering show,  
For which poor mortals often sigh ;  
Nor yet in honor's shining train,  
Does this transcendent blessing lie.

'Tis not in high ambition's aim,  
Or glories of a fading crown,

Nor yet in pride, whose haughty eye,  
Would ever but itself disown.

'Tis not in pleasure's sparkling cup,  
That wins, e'er touch'd, the sickly taste ;  
Nor yet in bow'rs of indolence,  
Presenting but a flow'ry waste.

*'Tis not on Earth, for earth's too mean,*  
*With all its gifts, this hope to move;*  
*But 'tis in Heav'n—full there it blooms,*  
*The offspring of immortal love.*

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### GOD IS GOOD.

God is good ! Each perfumed flower,  
The smiling fields, the dark green wood,  
The insect, fluttering for an hour,—  
All things proclaim that God is good.

I hear it in the rushing wind ;  
Hills that have for ages stood,  
And clouds, with gold and silver lined,  
Are still repeating, God is good.

Each little rill that many a year  
Has the same verdant path pursued,  
And every bird, in accents clear,  
Joins in the song that God is good.

The restless main, with haughty roar,  
Calms each wild wave, and billow rude,

Retreats submissive from the shore,  
And swells the chorus, God is good.

Countless hosts of burning stars  
Sing his praise with light renew'd ;  
The rising sun each day declares  
In rays of glory, God is good.

The moon that walks in brightness says,  
God is good !—and man endued,  
With power to speak his Maker's praise,  
Should still repeat that God is good.

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“FEAR NOT ! FOR I'M WITH YOU.”

Oh, thou ! who sit'st enthroned on high,  
In viewless splendour rayed ;  
Before the lustre of whose eye  
The brightest glories fade.

Though thou art high, yet thou dost hear  
The lowly suppliant's moan ;  
Though thou art great, each secret tear  
Begems thy radiant throne.

When shafts of anguish wound the soul,  
Thy healing balm is nigh ;  
When tempests rise, and billows roll,  
To thee, alone, we fly.

Then hush ! dark sorrow's weeping child,  
Tost on this troub'lous sea,

In strains of peace he whispers mild,  
 " Fear not ! for I'm with thee ! "

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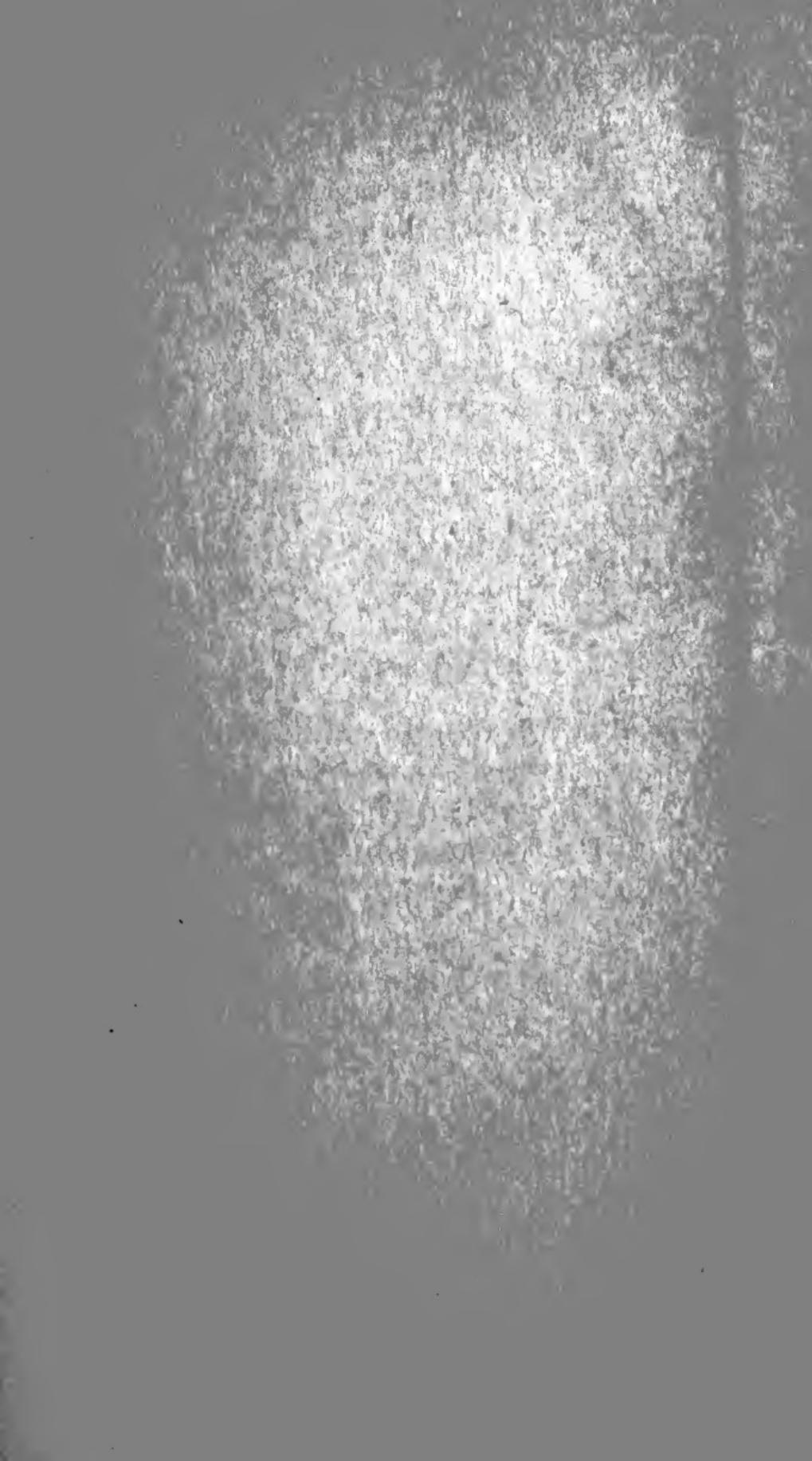
### VANITY OF THE WORLD.

Riches chance may take or give ;  
 Beauty lives a day and dies ;  
 Honour lulls us while we live ,  
 Mirth's a cheat and pleasure flies .

Is there nothing worth our care ?  
 Time, and chance, and death our foes ;  
 If our joys so fleeting are ,  
 Are we only tied to woes ;

Let RELIGION answer No ;  
 Her eternal powers prevail  
 When honours, riches, cease to flow ,  
 And beauty, mirth, and pleasure fail .

THE END.

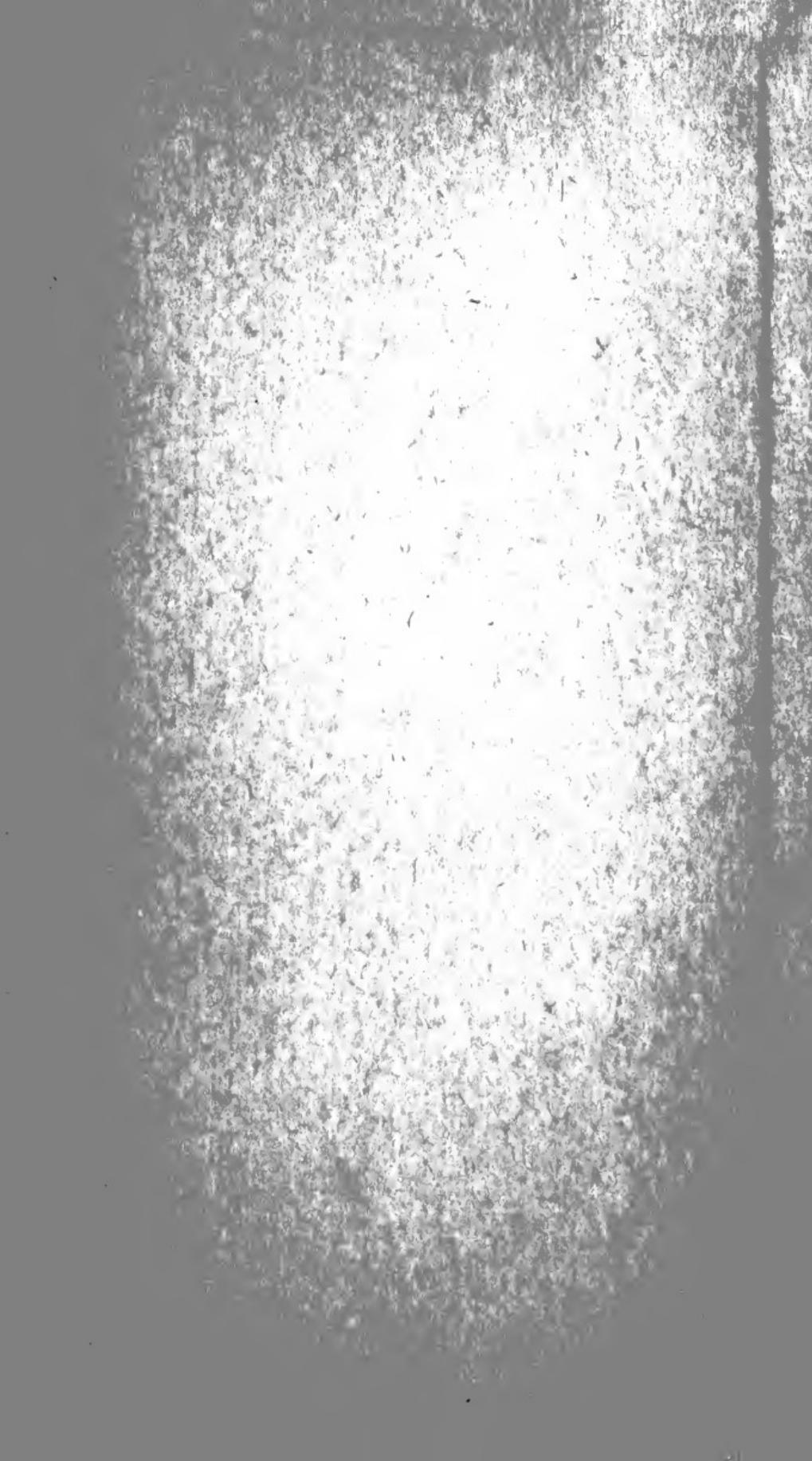


Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.  
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide  
Treatment Date: Nov. 2005

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